The Alabamian

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UM student completes summer internship with Bassmaster

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

Every year students spend hours searching for the perfect internship to prepare them for life post-graduation. For sophomore business management major, River Eubanks, his internship with Bassmaster could not have been more perfect.

Eubanks is from Ardmore, Oklahoma and a member of the Outdoor Scholars Program, the Fishing Team and the Honors Program here at UM. He spent this summer working as the Business Communication Intern for Bassmaster, an organization that runs a nationwide bass fishing tournament trail with high school, collegiate and professional leagues.

As an intern, Eubanks handled communication between Bassmaster and their affiliates to supply them with marketing content. As a business major and member of the Outdoor Scholars program, Eubanks felt prepared starting this position.

"My business management major has prepared me for this position by giving me good insight into how businesses handle communications and how their logistical operations work, but the Outdoor Scholars program gave me a good understanding of how business and consumer relations work within the outdoor industry and how they handle the marketing within that industry," said Eubanks.

With plans to attend law school after graduation and work as a corporate attorney, this internship provided Eubanks with experience that he will take with him to the workforce.

"My internship has prepared me by giving me an insight into corporate relationships and supply chain logistics. It also gave me good insight into the litigious aspects of the outdoor industry and how companies work to remain in compliance with federal statutes," said Eubanks.

Eubanks credits his internship and all that he has learned since to the Outdoor Scholars Program because of the opportunities he has been afforded within the program.

"The Outdoor Scholars Program gave me a good background to even be considered for this internship and it looked really good on my resume," said Eubanks.

After his summer of working as an intern, Eubanks has advice to share with students looking to work as an intern: "Be proactive in looking for an internship and take any opportunity that comes at you and don't underestimate the value of an internship during undergrad."



River Eubanks with CEO of Bassmaster, Chase Anderson. Photo courtesy of River Eubanks.

Guide to campus resources

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Photo by Ariel Hall. Photo of Carmichael Library.

The start of a new school year can be daunting for freshmen and returning students alike. Being back on the bricks may have you feeling a bit bewildered at times. The Alabamian wants to make navigating campus a little bit easier for you by helping to connect you to the resources you need. Compiled in this article is a list of campus resources available for free to students.

Career Development Center:

The Career Development Center offers a number of free resources related to career counseling and planning. Counselors at the Career Development Center help students explore their career options, find a major that aligns with their interests and career goals and connect with work opportunities. The Career Development Center also helps students strengthen their job market tools and skills, offering assistance in developing a resume and cover letter, networking techniques and job search strategies. The center offers interview preparation as well.

The Career Development Center also has many resources available online, including informational guides on topics such as resume best practices, interview preparation, professional development and graduate school.

For students in need of professional clothing for a job interview or other professional opportunities, the Career Development Center also maintains a professional clothing closet stocked with donated business and business-casual clothing items. Students can access the closet for free by making an appointment.

The Career Development Center's office is located on the second floor of Farmer Hall. Appointments are required to meet with a career counselor, and can be made by calling (205) 665-6262 or emailing career@montevallo.edu.

Carmichael Library:

Carmichael Library offers many more services than just loaning out materials and offering a quiet place to work—though it certainly has both of these services as well, boasting a collection of materials including books, articles and other media over its three floors as well as multiple study rooms.

Carmichael Library can help students access the technology they need. The library has 40 public access computers spread across its three floors, with a variety of software available—including Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud, Audacity and Java. Some equipment is also available for check out at the library's circulation desk, including laptops, tablets, video cameras and voice recorders.

Printers and copiers can also be accessed at the library. Printing costs 10 cents per page for black and white printing and 25 cents per page for color printing. Each student is allotted $15 for printing by the university for each semester. Printers at the library also offer a scan-to-email feature that is free to use.

Through Carmichael Library, students can access InterLibrary Loan—a system that loans materials between other libraries, giving students the ability to access materials they may need that are not available at Carmichael Library. Through InterLibrary Loan, students can receive digital or hard-copy materials after making an account and requesting the materials through the InterLibrary Loan portal.

Students conducting research who need help locating materials can also book a research consultation with a librarian at Carmichael Library. During a consultation, librarians can help students find sources for their research projects, cite sources and use the library's website and databases to find materials on their own.

Students interested in scheduling a research consultation can do so by filling out the research consultation request form available on the library's website. Additionally, they can stop by the Research Help Desk located on the library's main floor to speak with a librarian without an appointment.

The library also has a number of resources available via its website, including access to online databases that the library is subscribed to, research guides for specific courses and a searchable card catalog of library materials.

Also housed in the library's building are the Milner Archives and Pat Scales Special Collections, the Digital Media Lab and the Solution Center.

For the fall semester, Carmichael Library will be open 8 a.m. until midnight Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Fridays, 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturdays and 2 p.m. until midnight on Sundays.

Counseling Services:

Counseling Services offers free mental health services and resources to Montevallo students, faculty and staff. Services offered include individual counseling, case management, food and financial assistance and group counseling and workshops. Counseling is administered by licensed counselors and graduate interns who are under the supervision of a licensed counselor. All counseling sessions are confidential.

Students interested in these services must make an appointment. Appointments can be made by calling (205) 665-6245, emailing counseling@montevallo.edu or at Counseling Services' office in Puryear House during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Students in need of immediate counseling assistance can also contact Counseling Services via phone or at their office during regular business hours. After hours, students in need of assistance can contact Counseling Services' 24-hour support line, the Freddie Support Line, to speak to a licensed therapist by calling (833) 434-1217.

Digital Media Lab:

The Digital Media Lab, located on the ground floor of Carmichael Library, offers students, faculty and staff access to a wide range of digital media

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Letter from the editor: Stop playing it cool

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

One of my biggest secrets that I'm now going to publish for anyone and everyone to read is that approximately a month and a half into my time at The Alabamian, during my freshman year, I decided that I was going to become editor in chief of this paper. And now, three years later, I am.

Thinking about this for too long makes my head swim. It feels like yesterday that I was on the phone with my mom before going to my first Alabamian meeting telling her that if I didn't feel like I would enjoy being involved, that I could always ghost them. It's crazy how many new joys and passions you can discover in the span of three short years.

But, hypothetical reader, I can hear you asking, "Cady, why would that be one of your biggest secrets?" The answer, I'm sure, is more complicated than I can fully explain or even comprehend, but I have a working theory.

I often find my ambitiousness to be profoundly embarrassing. Not because what I'm ambitious about is necessarily embarrassing, but more because I tend to be embarrassed about being so earnest. To be ambitious is to desire something and, therefore, to make yourself vulnerable in a way. Desire is analogous with caring, and, sometimes, caring creates the opportunity to be disappointed and let down—which, let's be honest, are feelings nobody really wants to contend with. In that line of thinking, it seems so much easier to just act like you're totally laid back—apathetic even—than to actually acknowledge you want anything at all. In short, it's easier to play it cool.

But, at the beginning of this year, I wrote a list of quasi-New Year's resolutions—not so much a list of goals, as much as it was a list of reminders for the year ahead—and at the top of that list was "Stop playing it cool." I had realized that my desire to appear nonchalant was often born out of fear—fear that I come off too strongly, fear that I'm putting too many eggs in one basket. The list goes on and on. But, while I felt safeguarded by playing it cool, I also felt like a robot—cool, emotionless, empty.

Writer Hanif Abdurraqib wrote something —in an Instagram caption, of all places, about telling your friends you love them— that profoundly changed my thinking about playing it cool. He wrote, "If you are at the edge of the cliff anyway, consider taking the leap. The ground might be soft enough to hold you and whatever comes next, and if it isn't there will always be more cliffs, more edges."

Reading this totally reframed my thinking. Why was I so afraid of loving things out loud? There will always be more cliffs, more edges, so I should be jumping instead of holding back.

So, this is my year of loving! Loving things openly, hugely, stupidly and recklessly, even! Loving things even if it's embarrassing, if it would be easier pretend that I don't, and be open to the possibility of being disappointed because, eventually, that disappointment will pass. As the old and somewhat cliché saying goes, isn't it better to have loved and to have lost than to never have loved at all?

And The Alabamian is certainly something that I love. It's is a publication that I have put my blood, sweat and tears into—yes, literally all three—and it has been one of the most wonderful experiences I've ever had. During the past three years that I've worked on the paper, I've had the opportunity to learn new skills, put forth some work that I'm really proud of and meet and work with some of the most incredible, caring and creative people I've ever had the privilege to meet and call my friends through The Alabamian's staff.

As we begin this new semester and new school year, I encourage you to find what you're passionate about—what you love deeply and intensely—and pursue it relentlessly and unabashedly. Stop playing it cool! I hope, in writing this, that I've demonstrated that The Alabamian is something that I'm unabashedly passionate about, and I plan to make that continually clear as we continue to publish issues this year through the quality of work that we put out.

If being involved with student journalism sounds like something that you'd be passionate about too, then The Alabamian might be a good place for you as well, and I encourage you to get involved with us by coming to our meetings.

But, if your particular passions don't necessarily align with working at Montevallo's illustrious student newspaper, I urge you to still stay connected to our work as we publish throughout the year. Ultimately, we are a campus resource and what I strive for as editor in chief is to make The Alabamian a reliable and helpful resource for you. So, don't be a stranger! Help us by letting us know how we can help you by contacting us at our email, alabamian@montevallo.edu, or on our socials with any feedback.

Where you can—and where you should—spend your Flex Points

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor, ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor, WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content, and CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

If you have a university meal plan, you have Flex Points—points equivalent to dollars that can be spent on food at restaurants both on campus and in town. Some places to spend your Flex Points are better than others. Here's the Alabamian staff's hot takes on where to—and where to not—spend your Flex Points.

Baba Java:

The better coffee option in Montevallo. While it's difficult to not compare it to its building's former occupant, Strand Coffeehouse— which was far better, in this writer's opinion, I also appreciate the fact that it exists as an alternative to C's.

Pro tip: Get your coffee at Baba Java and desserts at C's. Win win.

8/10

C's Cake & Coffee House:

Cakes and coffee in a house!? What a delectable concept.

Come for the sandwiches, bring the lasagna home.

5/10

Einstein's:

Conveniently located in Farmer Hall and a great place to get a bagel or coffee in between classes.

7/10

El Agave:

Best place to spend your Flex Points, hands down. Good food, big portions, makes me feel like I'm eating an actual meal after I've been eating like I have to scavenge for food—what more could you want in a restaurant. A falcon's home away from home.

10/10

La Conchita:

If you are looking for a sweet treat, this is the place to go. The staff is friendly and there are a multitude of options to choose from. Those with a sweet tooth won't be disappointed.

9/10

Main Street Tavern:

Great spot to watch professors drinking after work and to get ruinously huge portions of good ol' boy American grub. This is the best use of your flex points.

9/10

Papa John's:

Great place to get a slice of pie if you like your pizza drenched in artery clogging butter garlic sauce for some reason.

4/10

Pita Pit:

Everything here kind of smells and tastes like onions. So, if you're into that, you might like it. If not, spend your Flex Points somewhere else.

Great spot to exchange a meal swipe for a wrap, but do not spend real money or flex points here. You should do those two options at El Agave. It's not worth it!

4/10

Slice Pizza:

The pizza is fine. Truly, it's just fine. However, the prices are not. Tell me why I'm spending $10 on pizza that tastes like those big slices of pizza that they sell in the Sam's Club food court for way less.

Excellent ranch if you're willing to spend $13 on chicken wings.

5/10

Subway:

It's Subway. What more could you want from it?

7/10



Coffee at Baba Java. Photo by Madelyn Alexender.



Slice Pizza. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.



Main Street Tavern. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.



C's Cake and Coffee House. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

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Remembering Dr. Forrester

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

On July 15, Dr. Stefan Forrester, better known as Steve by his friends, family and colleagues, suddenly, yet peacefully, passed away in his home.

Forrester was the University of Montevallo's only philosophy professor and was heavily involved in both UM's and the city of Montevallo's community.

Forrester, who was a lover of philosophy, poetry, creative writing and the humanities in its full scope, was a lifelong learner and passionate about education. Even throughout his professional career at UM, Forrester continued his educational journey by attaining a Master of Arts in religious studies from Athens State University. Forrester pursued this degree in hopes of offering religious studies classes in the upcoming fall 2023 semester.

Adjacent to his Master of Arts in religious studies, Forrester held a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, a Master of Fine Arts in poetry from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, a Master of Arts in philosophy from the University of Oklahoma, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Rochester.

Forrester was originally from Illinois and first began his teaching career at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. from 2005-07. Forrester then began his career at UM in the English department in 2007.

Forrester began as an Assistant Professor of English. Soon after, he was promoted to Associate Professor before taking over as UM's only philosophy professor in 2020 after the retirement of former philosophy professor, Dr. Michael F. Patton.

Forrester further cultivated the philosophy and religion minor in 2020, regularly teaching classes, some of them within the Honors Program. His course load regularly included an introduction to philosophy, ethics and logic. He also led the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, which aims to allow students' freedom of choice in developing a unique, interdisciplinary course of study in lieu of a traditional major.

Forrester also loved to expand the walls of philosophy in his classroom with special topic offerings often co-taught with other faculty members. Such topics included The Philosophy of Peace and Justice, The Philosophy of Science and Technology and The Philosophy of Poetry. The Philosophy of Peace and Justice class offering, co-taught last with Dr. Meredith Tetloff, became a class for the peace and justice studies minor, which Forrester helped to create.

Outside of the classroom, Forrester was involved in UM's community as former Faculty Senate President. He was also involved in the city of Montevallo's community and contributed to the "Chamber Chatter" publication by creating crossword puzzles. Forrester held a keen interest in vocabulary, and by experience, his crossword puzzles were never boring and always challenging.

Away from Montevallo, Forrester loved to travel and visited countries such as Scotland, England, Portugal, Spain and St. Croix as well as Cuba, which he visited with UM students and history professor Dr. John Bawden as part of his class 'Montevallo in Cuba.'

Forrester was a friend and mentor to many. His sense of humor, invaluable bank of knowledge and jolly yet sophisticated demeanor cultivated a presence that was more than just a professor.

His classes were interesting, thoughtful, insightful and aimed at discussion. Forrester never turned down an opinion and took interest in all ways of thinking, aiming to create collaborative conversations between all students.

He will forever be remembered by not only his teaching, but also by his laugh, his suspenders, his yellow coffee mug that seemed to accompany him everywhere, his kindness and for his love of education, Montevallo and his students.

UM will always be appreciative of Forrester's contributions to its history; he will be dearly missed.

UM nursing program continues to develop

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Plans for the University of Montevallo's nursing program, which initially began in spring 2021, have continued to develop over this summer. Helming this development is Courtney Bentley, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at UM.

Having already completed the Step I application of the Alabama Board of Nursing and requirements for the approval of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the nursing program is hopeful to commence operations in fall 2024.

Until then, the in-progress nursing program still requires an application for Step II of the Alabama Board of Nursing as well as accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Submitting Step II of the Alabama Board of Nursing new program application requires that plans for operations of the program have been reviewed and that there are motions of support in place for faculty and students.

The process of receiving these two approvals will begin after a dean for the program is hired. Two fulltime nursing educators will also be hired upon final approval of the program.

UM's nursing program will be housed in Myrick Hall, which has already undergone renovations to accommodate the new nursing major. Dr. Bentley says, "Phase I renovations of Myrick Hall, including the Simulation and Skills Lab, were completed in August 2023. Phase II will be completed by July 2024."

Any UM student will be able to declare a nursing major once accepted to UM, however, certain requirements must be met in order to advance into the professional sector of the program, which will begin in a student's junior year.

These requirements are based off of the Alabama Board of Nursing and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, but will be revised by the dean of the nursing program once one is hired. Once evaluated, the requirements for admission into the professional nursing program will be available to UM students.

The professional portion of the nursing degree, beginning in a nursing major's junior year, will be able to accommodate 20 students and include lectures, a skills lab and clinical partnerships with hospitals such as Shelby Baptist Hospital. As more faculty are hired and enough time has passed to gauge interest in the degree, Bentley expects that the seat number will, most likely, expand.

Although there are several nursing programs available to attend in Alabama, Bentley is concentrating on a unique approach for the program, one that is empathetic with the after- effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compassion fatigue, which is the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others, was heightened during the pandemic and is still ongoing. According to Bentley, it has partly led to a shortage of nurses and nursing programs in Alabama.

As a public liberal arts college, UM aims to engrain the liberal arts philosophy into the nursing program's curriculum, one that will also acknowledge compassion fatigue. Bentley says, "UM seeks to offer a nursing program grounded in a liberal education thereby engendering an ethic of care predicated on multidisciplinary and integrated learning. Such an ethic of care presents new opportunities to mitigate compassion fatigue within the profession."

UM Board of Trustees takes on two new members

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content.

Two new members of The University of Montevallo Board of Trustees were announced during summer 2023.

The University of Montevallo announced on June 6, that Governor Kay Ivey had appointed two new members to the UM Board of Trustees.

The two new trustees, Anita McDaniel Brueck and Judge Matt Fridy, both began their 12-year terms on the board in May 2023 and are both UM alumni.

Brueck graduated from UM with a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1977. She was a member of the Phi Mu sorority during her time at Montevallo and now funds the Brueck '77 Endowed Scholarship for Phi Mu members.

"I had grown up with my mother having come from Montevallo. Her family's lived here for over 100 years," Brueck said in a 2019 promotional video for the UM Day of Giving, "It's a liberal arts oasis, just a wonderful place for me to grow up."

Following her time at UM, Brueck began working in the property insurance claims business.

In 1985, she started the company ClaimSouth alongside her husband. In 1991, the Bruecks sold the company to a subsidiary of Swiss reinsurance company Swiss Re. After the sale, the Bruecks moved to Chicago where they began working with Sedgewick Claims Management Services Inc., an insurance company that provides loss adjusting and claims management services.

Describing her work, Brueck said, "I handle multinational corporate claims, worldwide for some companies. Some really large ones—Microsoft, Lufthansa, Archer Daniels Midland Google. You name it and I've tromped through their books at one time or another and inspected their damages. "

Brueck retired in 2018 after 41 years in the property insurance claims business as the Senior Executive General Adjuster for Vericlaim Inc. a subsidiary of Sedgewick.

Since graduating from UM with honors in 1998 with a degree in history, Fridy has been active in Alabama politics and law. He went on to earn a law degree from Samford University and served a one-year federal clerkship for U.S. District Judge Edwin Newlson beginning in 2001.

Fridy worked as an attorney at Birmingham law firm Wallace Jordan, Ratliff and Brandt from 2012-21, focusing on constitutional law, agricultural law and appellate litigation.

Fridy served as a Republican representative in the Alabama House of Representatives for District 73 which includes parts of Pelham, Alabaster and Montevallo. He was first elected in 2014, and was reelected in 2018 before resigning in 2020 upon being elected as a judge for the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals.

Fridy has also worked at UM as an adjunct professor of business law from 2010-12, and has served on the Board of Directors for the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, as the chairman of the Shelby County Republican Party and as a member of the Alabama Republican Executive Committee.

He currently resides in Pelham with his wife Kimberly and their five children.

The UM Board of Trustees has met once since the two new appointees took office in May. Board meetings are held in Reynolds Hall's Merrill Room and all meetings are open to the public.



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

"Just Show Up" show to be held in Orr Park

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content.

Radio stations 103.7 The Q and 102.5 The Bull will hold their "Just Show Up" show in Montevallo at 4 p.m. on Aug. 20 at Orr Park.

The show is free to attend for all ages and will feature live performances by five musical artists.

In attendance will be singer-songwriter CharlieonnaFriday, whose song "Enough" has received over 87 million listeners on Spotify, as well as indie pop band Lovelytheband, most known for their single "Broken" which reached the top 10 on the Billboard Radio Songs chart.

Several country music acts will perform including Frank Ray, a New Mexico native known for his single "Country'd Look Good on You" and his 2022 performance in the Grand Ole Opry as well as Easton Corbin who is known for his baritone voice and blend of classical and contemporary country music.

Also performing will be country artist, Kylie Morgan who has been performing country music since she was 12 years old and whose song "If He Wanted To He Would" has received over 62 million spotify listeners.

VIP passes, which include a meet and greet with all performing artists and a pass to skip the line, are available for $50. A portion of the proceeds from these tickets will go to benefit Shelby County First Responders.

103.7 the Q has been holding free "Just Show Up" music events in the Birmingham area since 2016. The event on Aug. 20 will be their second free show in Montevallo and marks the first time that the Q has held a "Just Show Up" show since October 2019.

The show will be sponsored by the University of Montevallo, Bobby Shunnarah Family Dentistry and Whataburger.

Sports

UM adds wrestling, acrobatics, tumbling to sports offerings

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

Over the summer, the University of Montevallo's athletics program underwent several hiring changes, hiring coaches for new and existing sports programs. Starting in the fall, UM Athletics will add a men's wrestling team and introduce a women's acrobatics and tumbling team. Women's basketball will also welcome Olivia Chapman as the new head coach.

This fall, Montevallo's Men's Wrestling Team will make its debut. This addition is the university's 22nd intercollegiate athletic sport.

UM Athletics is bringing on Daniel Ownbey as the first Men's Wrestling Head Coach. Ownbey has served as the head coach at Wheeling University since 2020.

"I am extremely excited to be returning to the south and beginning the process of building what will be a successful program," said Ownbey "There are amazing things in the future for the University of Montevallo, and I am excited to be a part of their family."

Ownbey's own collegiate success includes four-time All-American and two-time national champion in the 141-pound weight class at UNC Pembroke. When he graduated, he held the title of the program's third top-winning wrestler with a record of 133-18 (.881).

With this addition, the University of Montevallo is the second university in the state to offer men's wrestling as a sport, as well as the first NCAA Division II school in the state to offer men's wrestling.

UM Director of Athletics Mark Richard said, "Montevallo will be the only Division II institution sponsoring the sport and providing wrestling scholarships to prospective wrestling student-athletes."

The inaugural home meet is set for Nov. 16 in Trustmark Arena against Huntingdon College.

The newest addition to UM athletics and the university's 23rd intercollegiate athletic sport is a women's acrobatics and tumbling team. The University of Montevallo is the only NCAA school in Alabama to raise an acrobatics and tumbling team and the 35th NCAA Division II school for this quickly growing sport.

"We're proud to offer the opportunity for talented student-athletes to pursue acrobatics and tumbling at the collegiate level. We look forward to adding to our high-achieving student-athlete population on campus." Richard said.

Kati Horstmann has been named the University of Montevallo's first Acrobatics and Tumbling Head Coach. Horstmann comes from Trine University, where she has been the Head Acrobatics and Tumbling Coach since 2019.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to build the Acrobatics & Tumbling program at the University of Montevallo," Horstmann said, "With a supportive, forward-thinking administration that is dedicated to the development of A&T, I believe we will be able to lay the foundation for a championship culture. Thank you to my family, mentors, past coaches, former teammates and staff who have all played a pivotal role in my success. I am looking forward to beginning my journey at the University of Montevallo and continuing to pave the way for young women to have more opportunities at the collegiate level."

As a collegiate athlete, Horstmann was a four-time national champion in four seasons as a Baylor Acrobatics and Tumbling competitor. Felecia Mulkey, Head Acrobatics and Tumbling Coach at Baylor said, "Kati will ensure a positive student-athlete experience while competing at the highest level. I am excited for the future Falcon student-athletes and the Montevallo community as a whole."

Horstmann has been active in her role of Acrobatics and Tumbling Head Coach since summer 2023, giving her a full year to recruit before the team's first season begins in spring 2025. The acrobatics and tumbling athletes will join the campus in fall 2024.

On July 5, Montevallo named former Assistant Coach Olivia Chapman as Head Coach of Women's Basketball Team. This promotion makes Chapman the 12th head coach in the program's history.

"I am incredibly grateful and humbled to be named the head coach for this historic program to follow my mentor, Gary Van Atta," Chapman said. "It's an extremely great opportunity for me to step into. I'm excited to continue to be able to work with our current players and also the incoming freshmen coming in, so I'm just really ready for them to be back on campus so we can get started."

Former Head Coach Van Atta announced his retirement in June after 14 seasons with the University of Montevallo. Van Atta called the UM community "family for life." He concluded his career with a 244-161 record, owning the most wins in the program history with 244 wins and the highest win percentage out of any UM Head Coach with a .602.

Van Atta added Chapman to his team as an assistant coach prior to the 2022-2023 season.

"This year, I was able to learn from one of the greatest coaches around," Chapman said. "The responsibilities that he let me have throughout the year truly prepared me for this moment."

Chapman's goals as head coach include keeping the best players and student-athletes home in the state of Alabama and having an exciting 2023-2024 season.

"I just want everybody to know that we're going to run this program in a way that will make people proud," said Chapman "I think that we're going to play a very fun and exciting style of basketball that people will be eager to come see and that we will have young ladies on the team that they will love to be around and support."

The Women's Basketball Team has yet to release their upcoming 2023-2024 schedule.

Fall athletics schedule

DATE	TIME	TEAM	HOME/AWAY
Aug. 26	6:30 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Birmingham-Southern College
Aug. 31	4:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Emmanuel College
Aug. 31	6:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Kentucky Wesleyan College
Sept. 1	1:30 p.m.	Volleyball	at University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler Invitational)
Sept. 1	6:20 p.m.	Men's and Women's Cross Country	VSU Border Clash (Valdosta, Ga.)
Sept. 1	6:30 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Harding University (UT Tyler Invitational, Tyler, Texas)
Sept. 2	12:30 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Dallas Baptist Univeristy (UT Tyler Invitational, Tyler, Texas)
Sept. 2	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Trevecca Nazarene University
Sept. 2	3:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs St. Edwards University (UT Tyler Invitational, Tyler, Texas)
Sept. 2	6:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Clayton State Univeristy
Sept. 7	4:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs Univeristy of North Georgia
Sept. 7	7:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs University of West Alabama
Sept. 8	2:30 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Barry Univeristy (UAH Invitational, Huntsville, Ala.)
Sept. 9	10:00 a.m.	Volleyball	vs Trevecca Nazarene University (UAH Invitational, Huntsville, Ala.)
Sept. 10	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs Nova Southeastern University
Sept. 11		Men's Golf	Full Moon Invitational (Timberline Golf Club, Calera, Ala.)
Sept. 12		Men's Golf	Full Moon Invitational (Timberline Golf Club, Calera, Ala.)
Sept. 13	4:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs Newburry College
Sept. 15	11:00 a.m.	Volleyball	vs USC Aiken (PBC/Gulf South Crossover, Augusta, Ga.)
Sept. 15	3:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Georgia College (PBC/Gulf South Crossover, Augusta, Ga.)
Sept. 15	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs Univeristy of West Georgia
Sept. 15	7:30 p.m.	Men's and Women's Cross Country	Falcon Classic (Montevallo, Ala.)
Sept. 16	11:00 a.m.	Volleyball	at Augusta University (PBC/Gulf South Crossover, Augusta, Ga.)
Sept. 16	5:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Lander University
Sept. 17	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs Valdosta State University
Sept. 19	5:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at Lee University
Sept. 21	6:00:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs UAH
Sept. 22	12:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Shorter University
Sept. 22	6:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Shorter University
Sept. 24	12:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Lee University
Sept. 24	2:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Lee University
Sept. 25		Men's Golf	Cougar Invite (Green Island Country Club, Columbus, Ga.)
Sept. 26		Men's Golf	Cougar Invite (Green Island Country Club, Columbus, Ga.)
Sept. 26	5:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at Shorter University
Sept. 29	5:00 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs University of West Alabama
Sept. 29	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at University of West Alabama
Sept. 29	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Valdosta State University
Sept. 30	2:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs University of West Georgia
Oct. 1	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at UAH
Oct. 1	3:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at UAH
Oct. 3	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Lee University
Oct. 6	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs University of West Florida
Oct. 6	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at Auburn University Montgomery
Oct. 6	7:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs University of West Florida

A weekend guide to Montevallo

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

Moving away for college can be stressful, but choosing how to spend your free time in your new city does not have to be. Here are some of our recommendations on how to spend a weekend in Montevallo.

Start out your morning with your favorite coffee order at one of our three local coffee shops: Baba Java or C's Coffee which are located off campus or Einstein's Bagels on campus in Farmer Hall.

Your next stop should be something outdoors before the Alabama heat sets in. A walk in Orr Park to see the tree carvings or a hike through Shoal Creek Park to see the waterfall would be a scenic way to start your day outdoors.

After your time outside, you're probably looking for air conditioning and a good meal. Lunch at Main Street Tavern would do just the trick of cooling you off and fueling you up before your afternoon of exploring your new town.

Your afternoon is where you could get creative. There are always different events around town throughout the year. You could catch a home soccer or baseball game, stroll through the Montevallo Art Walk or visit American Village.

Wind down your day of exploration with a sunset picnic at the University Lake and end it with a sweet treat from La Conchita Bakery.

Montevallo is a small town with plenty to do. From art walks to athletic games there is always a way to keep exploring your new town.

Your guide to UM sorority recruitment

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor



Panhellenic council. Photo courtesy of Peighton Allen.

With BamaRushTok trending once again, it can leave students who are planning to go through the recruitment process here at Montevallo somewhat uneasy. Unlike the nature of rush at the University of Alabama, the recruitment process here is unique and designed to be a fun and lighthearted experience.

What makes Greek life at UM different from other institutions is the diversity of the chapters and the support that they provide for each other throughout the year.

"Don't worry about RushTok when coming to Montevallo because it is so much more laid back here. I have friends in other chapters and I can confidently say that no matter where you end up after recruitment, Greek life here is one big family with room for anyone," says Panhellenic President Peighton Allen.

What makes the recruitment process at UM more relaxed is the chance to meet people before the formal recruitment starts. You can meet members of the sororities as early as orientation during the summer.

Once students arrive on campus, they receive a schedule full of welcome events that are designed to get students acclimated to campus and to help them make friends and connections before classes start. These events are a great opportunity for new and returning students to meet members of campus organizations and to make connections beforehand which can offer you a peace of mind when beginning the formal recruitment process.

The Recruitment Process

Recruitment starts every year on the Friday of the first week of school, beginning with the sisterhood round. This is the longest round since the PNM, potential new member, will visit each chapter.

This round is the most laid back- it's a chance to get to know the sororities and for them to get to know you. You will learn about the different chapters' involvement on campus, the hobbies and interests of the members and what makes each chapter unique. If you go in with an open mind, you could leave this round with new friends across all of the chapters.

"My advice for sisterhood round is to go in with an open mind and leave the preconceived notions at the door. I know it is easy to perceive the different chapters on social media but the best way to find where you fit in is to leave that behind and get to know the different chapters in person," says member of Phi Mu sorority Jenna Hwang.

Philanthropy round starts the next day. You will visit up to four of the chapters to learn about the different organizations that the sororities support and the events they participate in to raise money for that organization. This is a good day to take a deeper look into how each chapter not only serves their philanthropy, but also how they serve their community.

Each chapter serves a different organization. Chi Omega supports the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Delta Gamma supports Service for Sight, Phi Mu supports Children Miracle Network Hospitals, Alpha Delta Pi supports the Ronald McDonald House and Alpha Gamma Delta supports the cause against world hunger.

The last day of recruitment tends to be the most stressful. By the time preference round starts you have narrowed down your choices to two chapters. This is the final round of recruitment and during this round you will have longer conversations where you will get to hear members' testimonies and the values on which the chapter was founded.

This round can bring up many emotions, not only for the PNM but for the active members as well. When making your decision, it is normal to feel conflicted and uneasy. Being honest with yourself and going with the chapter that aligns with your values the most will be the biggest aid in making your decision.

"Go in with an open mind and an open heart. Preference round is so special and you never know which sorority will surprise you and steal your heart," says member of Alpha Delta Pi EJ Bostick.

Following preference round is bid day. This is when all of the PNMs line up on the steps of Palmer Hall to open their bids and run home to their new chapter.

Behind all of the chanting, the outfits and the stress, going through recruitment is a special process that can lead to lifelong friendships. If Greek life is something that interests you, there is a place for everyone within the Greek community at UM.

Guide to campus resources cont.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

equipment and software.

Software available on computers in the Digital Media Lab include Adobe Creative Cloud products, audio editing software such as Audacity and video editing software such as iMovie.

Three 3D printers are also housed in the Digital Media Lab. Students interested in using the 3D Printers must follow the 3D printing policies that are available on Carmichael Library's website.

The Digital Media Lab is open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays. The lab is closed on Saturdays.

Those in need of assistance with a project are asked to please contact Digital Media and Emerging Technologies Librarian Michael Price at least two weeks in advance. Price can be contacted at his email, mprice3@montevallo.edu, or by phone at (205) 665-6105.

Disability Support Services:

For students with disabilities, Disability Support Services offers assistance for disability access and accommodations. DSS can help students receive and coordinate accommodations such as accessible parking, testing accommodations, housing-related accommodations and more. Students who would like to request an accommodation can do so at any point in time, but some accommodations—such as housing-related accommodations and requesting alternative format class materials, such as materials in Braille—have deadlines in order to guarantee that accommodations can be made.

Additionally, students who believe that they have been discriminated against because of their disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or under the Americans with Disabilities Act can file complaints with DSS to begin an internal disability grievance procedure. All complaints must be filed in writing within 30 days of the alleged act of discrimination or the student becoming aware of the alleged discrimination. These complaints must contain the name and contact information of the student alleging discrimination, a description of the alleged violation and any relevant information about the alleged act of discrimination—such as the names of university buildings or employees involved. Complaints should be addressed to Disability Compliance Officer, Station 6250, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL, 35115.

DSS's office is located in the rear central lower wing of Main Hall. Students can also contact DSS via email at dss@montevallo.edu and by phone at (205) 655-6250.

Falcon Success Center:

One resource for students looking for academic support is the Falcon Success Center. The center runs several free programs focused on offering students academic support.

One of these services is the Learning Enrichment Center, which offers free tutoring services for a variety of courses and subject areas. Tutoring is offered via multiple modalities including individual tutoring, small group tutoring, online tutoring and drop-in tutoring. Tutors are students who have undergone training and have taken the courses that they are tutoring. Additionally, they must receive a faculty recommendation in order to tutor for the course.

The Learning Enrichment Center is located in the bottom floor of Carmichael Library. Students who would like to schedule a tutoring appointment can schedule one online, by email at enrichment@montevallo.edu and by phone at (205) 665-6113.

Student Success Coaching is another service offered by the Falcon Success Center. The center's Student Success Coach, Elisabeth Ownbey, can meet with students to provide guidance related to academic success skills such as time management, note-taking tips, organization and more.

Appointments for success coaching can be made online. Students can also contact Ownbey via email at eownbey@montevallo.edu or via phone at (205) 665-6451.

The Falcon Success Center is located in the Van Tuyll House. They can be contacted by phone at (205) 665-6092 and by email at falconsuccesscenter@montevallo.edu.

Harbert Writing Center:

The Harbert Writing Center offers free writing consultation services to students. Students who need help with writing assignments in any class can schedule an appointment with one of the center's consultants, who are trained to help with all aspects of the writing process—from brainstorming ideas to proofreading and editing the final product. The Harbert Writing Center utilizes peer-to-peer consulting, meaning trained students provide consultations. Writing Center appointments are available in-person in Humanities Room 311 or virtually Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Consulting sessions can be scheduled in advanced if a student wishes to work with a specific consultant or can be conducted on a drop-in basis. Evening appointments are also available virtually Monday through Thursday from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. Students can schedule an appointment at montevallo.mywconline.com.

The Harbert Writing Center can also be contacted at their email, writingcenter@montevallo.edu, and by phone at (205) 476-2024.

Solution Center:

The Solution Center, located on the ground floor of Carmichael Library, can assist students, faculty and staff with computer services and network issues. Issues related to university email, Banner, Canvas, connecting to FalconNet and printing can be addressed by the Solution Center.

The Solution Center cannot repair personal equipment.

The Solution Center is open from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Fridays. They can also be contacted by phone at (205) 665-6512 or by email at solutioncenter@montevallo.edu.

Student Health Services:

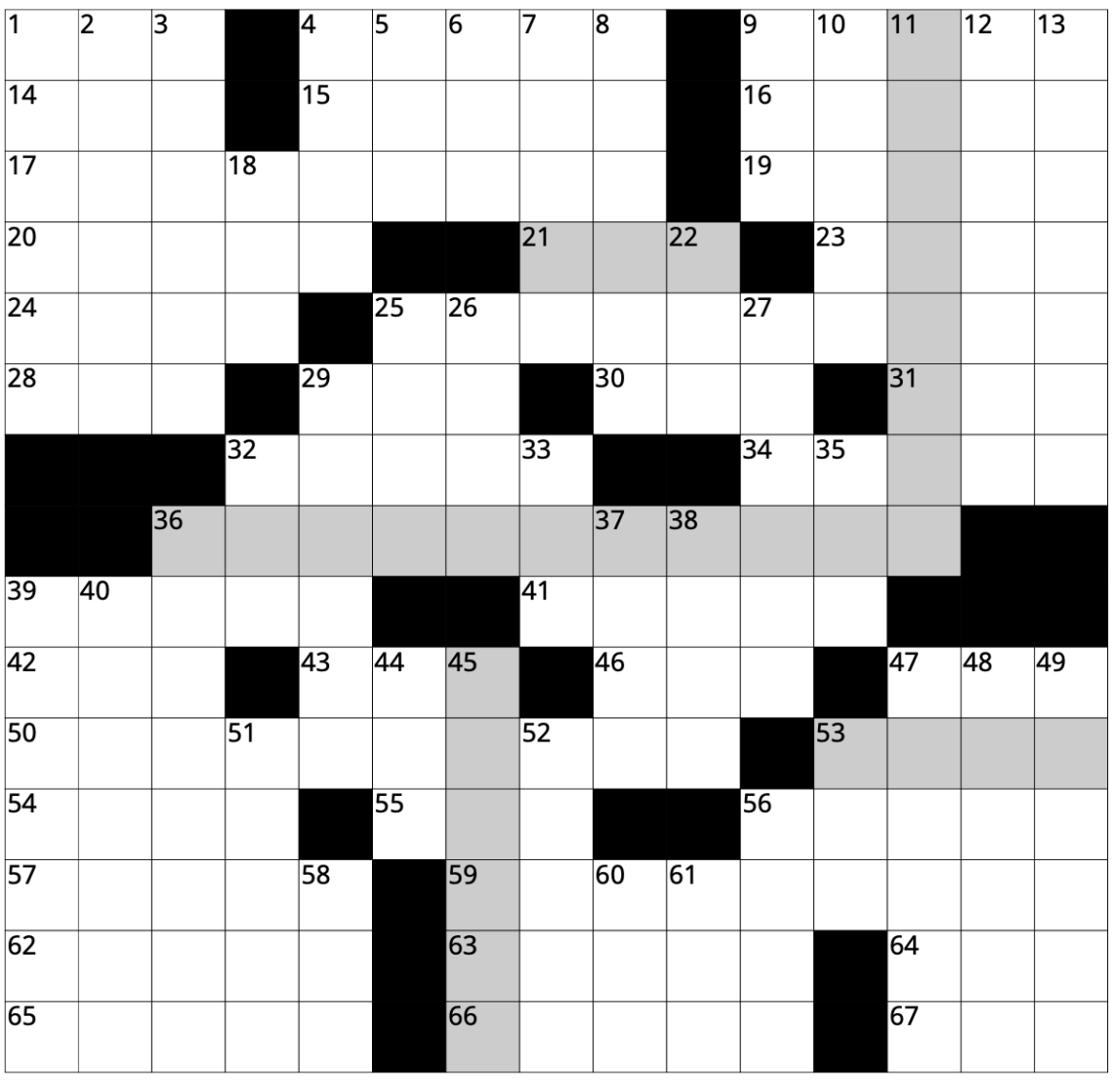
Student Health Services is an on-campus clinic that provides basic medical care services for free. Services offered by Student Health Services include diagnosis and treatment of minor injuries and illnesses, provision of select prescription and over-the-counter medicines, select diagnosis testing, vaccination clinics, HIV and sexually transmitted infections testing clinics and referral to off-campus medical services if needed.

The clinic can also issue students excuses for missed classes. However, getting an excuse for any classes missed to visit Student Health Services is not guaranteed, and is up to the discretion of the provider.

Appointments are required to meet with Student Health Services. Students can make an appointment by calling (205) 665-6275 during the office's hours, Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Their office is located in the East Wing of Main Hall. Student Health Services can also be contacted via email, healthserv@montevallo.edu.

Crossword: It's always sunny in Montevallo

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Not yet determined on a schedule
4. Volcanic flows
9. Sign with a Beyoncé groove
14. Musician's asset
15. Make law
16. Neptune's realm
17. Armored animal
19. Titular Eric Clapton lady
20. What scouts earn
21. Campus event planner (abbr.)
23. Irritated state
24. Sandler of "Punch-Drunk Love"
25. Result of some Wikipedia trips
28. Beam of sunshine
29. Void in Vichy
30. Second person
31. Michele who may or may not be able to read
32. Tiny bits
34. Doomed Biblical city
36. When it's raining, where many Montevallo student take a tumble
39. Hits on the head
41. Guy with the world on his shoulders
42. What an actor may have done when giving a stellar performance, leaving no crumbs in the process
43. Move like a bunny
46. Guerrilla group in the Colombian conflict (abbr.)
47. Scottish refusal
50. Classmate who will help you cram before an exam
53. One of two College Night factions (with 45 Down)
53. Marketing name for an invasive fish
55. Dadaist artist Jean
56. Four Seasons' Frankie
57. Really jazzed
59. Make an appearance in someone else's selfie
62. Third largest Korean city
63. Cap
64. ___ pal
65. Sporadically (after off)
66. Top-tier
67. Washington's bill

Down:

1. Where you might be able to order chamomile or chai
2. Damascus river
3. When you do push-ups
4. Intro to a news story
5. Singer DiFranco
6. Actor Kilmer
7. Emily Dickinson line, "Not with _ ____, the Heart is broken"
8. Visit briefly
9. Tenn. athlete
10. What your grandmother might mistakenly call Apple Pay
11. Famously haunted hall on campus
12. Astronomy pioneer
13. What varsity athletes are
18. year meeting for everyone in an organization (abbr.)
22. AFL partner
25. Baseball Babe
26. Latin wing
27. 2003 romcom "Under the _____ Sun"
29. Like many theatre students
32. Squid's output
33. Loan provider for mom and pop stores (abbr.)
35. Green-lights
36. Outdid
37. Shared a tweet (abbr.)
38. In a sick way
39. "Everytime We Touch" Eurodance group
40. Place to put your feet up
44. Abbreviation for a citrusy destination on the Gulf of Mexico
45. One of two College Night factions (with 53 Across)
47. Hallmark of stealth wealth fashion
48. "Midnight Rider" brothers
49. Fit for consumption
51. Muralist Rivera
52. Alternative abbreviation for the highest degree
53. Shoot the breeze
56. November task
58. Grayish brown
60. Singer of 2014 radio hit "Cheerleader"
61. Small songbird

Scan for answers!



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Aries: The new semester is looking bright for you, Aries. Work hard and expect many successes. But I also mean literally bright, as in sunny. Make sure you invest in a good sunscreen and good aloe gel, I see a wicked sunburn in your future.

Taurus: Are you feeling unmotivated, Taurus? Perhaps it's because you're directing your energy to the wrong outlets. Reevaluate your priorities this semester. Find what you're excited about and focus on it instead. Abandon ship on everything else.

Gemini: Prioritize going on long walks in the coming months, Gemini. You have a lot going on in your head right now and need some time to think. Take a lot of hikes to think things over. Come to solid conclusions before you act on anything.

Cancer: You've been planning ahead too much, Cancer. Stop counting your chickens before they hatch! Something big is not going to play out like you expected it to this semester, but that's okay. Make lemonade out of lemons and make the best out of a disappointing situation. Maybe the end result will be better than what you had planned.

Leo: The start of the semester is a great time to start fresh, Leo. Set some concrete goals. I mean literally concrete. Get into construction.

Virgo: Make sure you water your plants this semester, Virgo. You probably bought five new plants to start this semester off right—a very admirable effort. Just make sure you actually follow through and take care of them, lest they start wilting on your window sill.

Libra: Have a metaphysical semester, Libra. Question everything and look for deeper, hidden answers. Enjoy the journey of hypothesizing and test your working theories.

Scorpio: When it rains, it pours, Scorpio, and I'm seeing a large chance of rain in the forecast for your semester. Make sure you have your umbrella ready and shelter prepared so you can wait for the worst to blow over. Curl up with a nice book while it rains, too.

Sagittarius: You're definitely going to get stuck in a time loop this semester, Sagittarius. I'm talking a real "Groundhog Day" situation here. Unfortunate, but you should at least try to make the most of it. Be unpredictable, never do the same thing twice—it's the only way to preserve your sanity in times like these.

Capricorn: Get into writing poetry this semester, Capricorn. It doesn't have to be good; it just has to be cathartic. Honestly, the cringier it is the better.

Aquarius: I see student journalism in your future, Aquarius. You should consider joining The Alabamian this semester. It's a lot of fun, I promise.

Pisces: Feeling like a fish out of water, Pisces? Then go to the beach! Sometimes getting out of your comfort zone is good, but make sure you take the time to appreciate the people, places and things that make you feel at ease this semester. Bravery isn't an endurance sport, it's good to feel good too.



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UM alum hired as head esports coach

By M.K. BRYANT.



UM's esports team. Photo by Carter James.

University of Montevallo alum Ethan Baggett has been hired as the new head coach for the university's esports team, taking over for Brandon Parramore. Baggett, who graduated in December 2022 with a degree in business administration, was on the Esports team from 2019-2020, serving as the Overwatch team captain.

"I had the really unique opportunity to step into the team captain role for the Overwatch team for our first time competing," Baggett said. "We made it to the playoffs, so that was a really big moment for us since it was our first time competing as the Overwatch team."

This first competition was the Peach Belt Conference, an annual collegiate athletic conference with participants from the southeastern United States.

Baggett learned about the job opening through the Montevallo Esports Discord server, where he says alumni remain active.

"It's still a newer team, and it's this thing that we've invested a lot of our time and energy into," Baggett said, referring to himself and the other alumni. "Seeing it grow is really rewarding."

Baggett encourages anyone interested to join the esports Discord server. It includes public spaces outside of the private team channels.

This semester marks the 5th anniversary of Montevallo's esports team. Their first year, 2019-2020, was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our first year was when everything went online," assistant coach Brendan Beal said, "So we've taken a couple steps backwards at points, but we've been steadily moving forward for the past two years."

Beal expressed excitement about having an alum from the esports team return as the new head coach.

"He's very responsible," Beal said, "and the fact that he was here meant that, in some ways, I had been interviewing him for two or three years."

Beal and Baggett both described coaching an esports team as a different experience than coaching a traditional sports team.

Baggett explained how beneficial it is to have prior insight on the different games that the team competes in.

"Being the head coach of the esports team is very unique because with a sport like basketball or lacrosse, that sport is the one sport that's happening; whereas I've got five different games that all are very different and unique," Baggett said.

The esports team has five teams playing Overwatch, League of Legends, Rocket League, Valorant and Super Smash Bros Ultimate.

"The idea that I get to do my dream job at the university that I chose and graduated from is such a surreal experience," Baggett said.

"I also feel like it equips me more because I'll be able to talk to my players about the school in a way that other coaches who didn't go and have the college experience at Montevallo might not be able to do."

Current Overwatch captain Jake Stoup looks forward to seeing what Baggett brings to the team.

"I am very excited with the new head coach, and I think it's very cool that the new head coach was the old Overwatch captain," Stoup said.

Stoup hopes that Baggett will work with him to help grow the team.

Baggett said that he has big ideas for the team, and he looks forward to increasing the team's activity on campus.

"It's nice to see the Overwatch captain come home," Beal said.

Folk art exhibit 'Family Ties' holds reception in Poole Art Gallery

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content.



Ceramic work by Jeff Wilburn and Sandra Brown. Photo by Birdie Adkinson.

The art exhibit, "Family Ties," held in the Center For the Fine Arts Poole Art Gallery, featured paintings and ceramic works by self-taught late 20th and early 21st century folk artists from Alabama and Georgia.

Among the more than 30 works exhibited in the collection were colorful and childlike depictions of American pop and folk iconography created by artists from multiple generations of the Tolliver, Finster and Brown families.

A closing reception for the exhibit was held in the Poole Art Gallery on Aug. 24, giving those involved a chance to speak on the process of putting together the collection as well as the significance of the pieces.

"Family Ties" was a collaboration between folk art collector and UM alumni Rod Hildreth, who provided the works of art displayed at the exhibit, and the UM Department of Art as part of the experiential learning art history course, ART 327: Caring for Art Collections.

The course was taught by art professor Dr. Catherine Walsh in the spring 2022 and spring 2023 semesters. During the spring 2022 semester, students worked to research, catalog, inventory and photograph the artworks in the Hildreth Collection. During the spring 2023 semester, the exhibit was conceptualized with students designing the installation and writing labels for the displayed works of art.

"You're standing in the middle of a student production right now. Everything from the hardware that is holding up the artworks to the design of the space—students are responsible for that," Walsh said at the reception, "Among the things we learned about and then applied to this project are art handling skills—so we learned best practices for art handling and also art storage."

Walsh also spoke on art cataloguing skills, both old and new, learned by students, saying, "We did a lot of condition reporting, examining artworks and documenting how they look right now as we are experiencing them and how that compares to when we received them or how they look two weeks from now and then more kind of current practices of digital cataloguing, so there were some important digital skills that were also acquired in the process."

Hildreth, who knew and bought artworks from the featured artists personally, spoke at the reception, explaining the history and significance of the artwork on display. Hildreth also explained the artists' family lineages for which the show was named.

Featured artists Mose Tolliver, Howard Finster and Jerry Brown all shared their love for art amongst their respective families. They inspired their family members to create artistic works which were displayed in the exhibit as well.

Tolliver, known as Mose T., was a Black artist from near Montgomery who was rendered unable to walk in the 1960s by a load of marble that fell from a forklift.

Hildreth recalled visiting Tolliver in his home, bringing food to the artist which he would eat in bed while painting, as well as beer so he could have metal pop tabs to make hanging devices for his paintings.

Tolliver is famous for his paintings on scrap wood which include portraits and bright depictions of watermelons and school busses—all of which were present at the exhibit.

Hildreth explained that the school bus painting displayed in the exhibit was the first one by Tolliver that depicted people on the bus and was done after Hildreth asked why Tolliver never included passengers in his paintings.

Explaining the significance and influences of the piece, Hildreth recalled, "He said, 'Come back and I'll put some people there.' He put Blacks in the front and whites in the back. He was from Montgomery, Alabama with the bus boycott, and I said, 'This looks like a tribute to Rosa Parks,' and he said, 'Well, I knew her.'"

Tolliver inspired his children to create similar artistic works. This includes Annie Tolliver who also had artworks displayed in the exhibit, such as "My Three Nieces eating Watermelon" and a depiction of the Statue of Liberty entitled, "Status of Liberty."

Featured artist Finster worked as a Baptist preacher in Fort Payne, Ala. before deciding he could serve God better as an artist. Finster inspired works by his sons Roy Finster and Michael Finster whose pieces were shown in the exhibit as well.

Artworks by the Finsters shown in the exhibit included colorful portrayals of animals and Americana and Christian iconography painted on wood, often paired with written messages that extoll religious themes, contain poetic reflections or provide context for the works themselves.

These works include depictions of Coca-Cola bottles, angels, Cadillacs, George and Martha Washington and Randy Owen, singer of the Southern rock band Alabama.

The Finsters' works have garnered widespread attention, with Howard Finster producing album art for "Little Creatures" by The Talking Heads and "Reckoning" by R.E.M. Finster's work has been displayed at the Library of Congress and Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Jerry Brown, from Hamilton, Ala., came from a long line of potters and was best known for his face jugs and utilitarian pottery. Both styles of pottery were on display at the exhibit as well as ceramic works by Brown's wife, Sandra Brown, and stepson, Jeff Wilburn.

These works of pottery were double-sided face jugs created collaboratively by Sandra Brown and Wilburn commemorating the presidential election of 2016 with one side depicting Donald Trump's face and the other side Hillary Clinton's. The two also created another piece for 2020 with one side showing Trump and the other Joe Biden.

Hildreth explained that his appreciation for folk art is rooted in a deep love of art going back to his time taking art classes at UM. Post-graduation, Hildreth worked as a school guidance counselor hoping to inspire creativity within his students.

Speaking on his experiences as a guidance counselor, Hildreth said, "I tried to see the good in everybody and every creature and especially students and if someone came in, I didn't try to say because you're a female you've got to be a nurse or a secretary or a schoolteacher and you could be a doctor, lawyer, a restaurant owner, lawyer or whatever you want to be."

This principle of seeing the worth and creative potential of everyday people is something that Hildreth sees as connected to his fascination with self-taught folk artists. Hildreth said, "I think that became ingrained in me to be fair, to treat people fairly and see the worth in people — and some people might not like some of this and they think I'm crazy and I admit it, but I enjoyed it and liked it."

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Letter from the editor: Go watch movies with your friends

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

I love movies.

I mean, I really love movies. Love them so much I find a way to shoehorn movie recommendations into most conversations. Love them so much that my Letterboxd diary has started to resemble my actual diary. Love them so much that, if I had the required skill set and a mind that thought in a way that was conducive to it, I would be making movies instead of just sitting here writing about them.

A lot of people who really love movies talk about how they've loved them for as long as they can remember. I don't think that's really true for me. Sure, I've liked movies for as long as I can remember, but it wasn't ever really that deep. Instead, I think I made a very conscious decision to start loving movies when I was teenager. Mostly, it was out of curiosity—I had always loved reading; it made sense to me that I would love even more storytelling in another form.

So, in January 2020, I made a New Year's resolution to watch 52 movies I had never seen before that year—basically, to watch a new movie for every week of the year. And I was bound and determined to meet my goal. I set up a page in my journal to keep track of all the movies I watched that year. I began heavily curating my Letterboxd watchlist. I was approaching my movie-watching goal with the discipline of a runner training for a marathon.

And then in March 2020, as you all are, I'm sure, painfully aware of, the world kind of stopped turning as the COVID-19 pandemic proliferated. And, as I quarantined, I began to devour movies at an unprecedented pace.

Watching movies quickly developed into an isolationist activity for me. It's weird to talk about having fond memories of quarantine because so much of that period was, obviously, awful. But, I watched some of my favorite movies for the first time while I was quarantining—movies that changed me as a person, such as Wes Anderson's "The Darjeeling Limited," and Levan Akin's "And Then We Danced." In total, I watched 74 new films that year and, while I certainly did not love all of them, I loved every second I spent discovering new stories.

I would even argue that there are some movie-watching experiences that have been heightened by the fact that I watched them on my laptop alone in my room. The sheer level of emotion I felt after watching "Brokeback Mountain" for the first time under these conditions, immediately followed up by sobbing my eyes out while listening to The Flying Burrito Brothers' "Hot Burrito #1"—a very devastating song with a very silly title—is yet to be matched by anything else. Sometimes, watching a movie alone in your room is really good for you.

Once movie theaters began to reopen, I didn't feel a great urge to go start seeing movies in theaters even though I was now, I felt, certifiably a film lover. Part of it stemmed from the fact that my local theater seemed incapable of showing anything that wasn't attached to Marvel. Part of it is that I am, famously, very cheap and the thought of spending $15 to go do something I can do at home is enough to send me to an early grave. But then, I started going to the movies with my friends.

The first movie I saw in theaters post-COVID-19 lockdown was Anderson's "The French Dispatch." I saw it with my mother and, therefore, it does not count in the narrative of this story of going to see movies with my friends—I just wanted to have my facts straight.

The second movie I saw in theaters post-COVID-19 lockdown was "The Room," Tommy Wiseau's trashfire masterpiece that's notoriously heralded as the worst film ever made. I went to see it with live commentary from its star, Greg Sestero, with my friends at Sidewalk Cinema in Birmingham. Despite the fact that "The Room," is, undoubtedly, one of the most awful movies I've ever seen, I had such a wonderful time watching it. Being in a room full of people who were willing to buy into having an emotional experience together—even if that experience was just having a silly goofy time—unlocked some secret joie de vivre that I hadn't even been aware I was cheating myself out of. It's refreshing to be so openly emotional in a world that, often, feels as though it prizes stoicism, and getting to have that experience with my friends made it even sweeter.

This past weekend, I was lucky enough to spend my Saturday at the annual Sidewalk Film Festival in Birmingham, seeing movies with my friends, and I was reminded again of how much of a gift it is to sit down and share a movie with others.

In movies, as with any other art form, we, as viewers, are able to find little pieces of ourselves projected clearly in front of us so that we can poke and prod and examine them. Getting to go through this process of emotional examination side-by-side with your friends achieves a level of vulnerability that is rarely reached through other means. Whether it was talking to one friend about our grandparents after seeing "Mississippi River Styx," hearing what lines stood out to another friend from "Dig!" or even just seeing what jokes made my friends laugh the hardest in "Bottoms," over that Saturday, I felt myself get closer to my friends and closer to myself through the simple act of sharing a movie together.

So, I implore you, go see movies with your friends! While I do think that actually going to a movie theater adds a level to the experience—once again, I cannot recommend Sidewalk Cinema enough, it's not completely necessary. Even just watching a movie on your couch with friends is wonderful too. At the end of the day, life is too short to not get weirdly vulnerable and emotional in front of your friends. Share art with one another! Laugh together! Go watch movies with your friends!

Freshman take on Welcome Week

By CARTER BIBB.

In mid-August, the University of Montevallo wakes up from a summertime slumber, eager to begin its newest semester. Professors return to their classrooms, upperclassmen return to a familiar environment ready to begin classes and freshmen are, well, lost.

There are the classes and new living arrangements. Being away from our families for the first time since birth will create new everyday challenges you've never faced, like doing the dishes or your laundry. In addition, there can be immense pressure of forming new social circles, only compounded by the myriad of activities have been graciously organized by faculty and student organizations. Put together, the mass of things one has access to quickly becomes overwhelming.

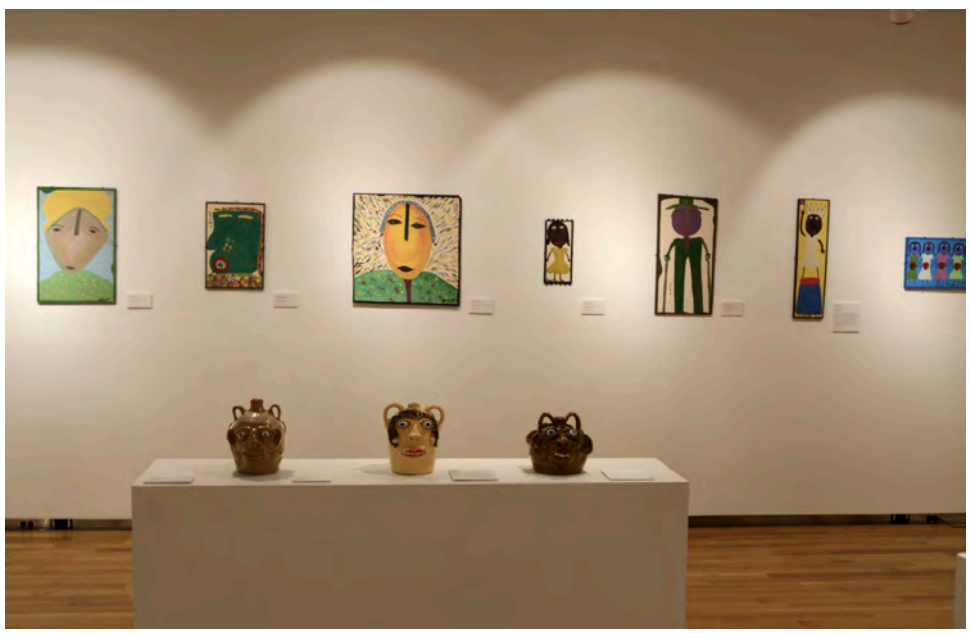
Inspecting the Welcome Week schedule, I made a few promises to myself. The first was that I would go to events and meetings. I have a bad habit of getting too nervous about socializing and finding some lame excuse as to why I skipped it. I would not have a repeat of all those times in high school where I missed a thing I wanted to do because I was worried that people would look at me weird.

I didn't go to the vast majority of the events planned during Welcome Week, as I suspect many people like myself didn't either. However, the ones I did go to, I enjoyed immensely; Such as the Montevallo Organization of Gaming and The Alabamian interest meeting, where I was gifted a chance to write an article for the newspaper--this article, actually!

When the week was completed, I will admit I felt disappointed in myself. Had I gone to the right events? Could I have done something differently? What if I missed something I would have enjoyed? Had I made any friends? Similar thoughts would continue to plague me as the week wound to its end.

I want to end this with two pieces of advice: First, get yourself a calendar, not only to plan ahead academically, but also socially, and maybe it can also work as a motivator when you need one. The second piece of advice was found while mulling over those questions I mentioned earlier. You can never truly know the big "what-ifs." Fixating on them will do you no good, so instead remember that you always have the next week, and the next week and the next week.

'Family Ties' art gallery photos, cont.



"Family Ties" art gallery. Photo by Birdie Adkinson.



Ceramic work by Jeff Wilburn and Sandra Brown. Photo by Birdie Adkinson.

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Hill House shake-up rehouses several university programs

By CADY INABINET, Editor in chief.



Exterior of Hill House. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

As the fall semester enters full swing, Montevallo's Honors Program, the Game Studies and Design Program and the Malone Center are all settling into new homes, as the Malone Center's relocation to Hill House has prompted the other programs to move to new locations.

Hill House, prior to the start of the fall semester, had housed the university's Honors Program as well as the Game Studies and Design Program, in addition to the offices of the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Malone Center, a university-based program that seeks to train and provide professors with the technology to more effectively teach students and had previously been located in Wills Hall, is now based in Hill House. This prompted the Honors Program offices to move to Ramsay Hall and the Game Studies and Design Program to move to Harman Hall.

Director of the Malone Center, Emily Gill, and Game Studies and Design Program Coordinator and former Director of the Honors Program, Dr. Cathlena Martin, both said they were informed of relocation plans this summer by Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Courtney Bentley. The move was prompted because UM's affiliate of the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative, known as AMSTI, is being moved into the Malone Center's former space in Wills. UM's AMSTI facility had previously been housed at a facility in Pelham.

AMSTI is an Alabama Department of Education initiative that aims to improve STEM education throughout the state by supporting educators and students. AMSTI offers professional learning opportunities, instructional materials and educator support, with sites offering these services affiliated with universities located throughout the state.

"I think having AMSTI on campus presents an opportunity for UM Faculty to connect with the learning experiences of our students prior to when they start at UM to best plan for how to facilitate a successful first couple of years," said Gill regarding the move. "They are busy people and we are busy people, but at least being on the same campus makes scheduling easier!"

Martin shared that moving the Game Studies and Design Program to Harman made sense, as it is a part of the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Computer Science, which is based in Harman.

"GSD is a minor within the BCMC department, which is housed in Harman, so it is a natural location for GSD to be moved to," Martin said.

She added that a classroom in Harman, Harman 114, is currently undergoing renovations and that she is, "confident the new room will provide GSD classes with the requirements they need once it is finished."

Similarly, Gill sees the Malone Center's move to Hill House as an opportunity for the center.

"I think there are opportunities for programming growth in Hill House once the renovations are complete," she said.

Gill went on to point out some of the changes the Malone Center is hoping to make, saying, "What we are focusing on providing for the campus in the immediate future will be technology-enabled discussion style learning spaces for classes to reserve, training space for Faculty to learn important tools for enhancing both in-person and online instruction, and connection spaces for Faculty to exchange their research and collaborate on beneficial projects for campus from book study groups to topic-specific learning communities. Looking ahead a few years? I think we could look for some grants to improve the accessibility to/in the building, always a challenge for older structures, but not impossible and a great opportunity for creativity in design."

Gold Side's new leader takes the reigns

By RACHEL RAIFORD.

Last spring, Gold Side elected two leaders, Anna Brasfield and Nick Lyles. However, only Brasfield led the side into the new school year.

Although this was an unexpected change, Brasfield seemed to persevere. While some took to social media to criticize the leader, others stepped in to back her and the side.

Cole Broadhead, a member of Gold Side's Cabinet, has praised Brasfield's efforts to "communicate and promote unity" during their time of uncertainty.

"Although it is unfortunate, I'm proud that my leader has shown that she is willing to put in the work needed for a victory," Broadhead said. "I believe we will stay true to always allowing room for one more Gold while giving a new leader the chance to show their devotion to the side."

Throughout Welcome Week, Gold Side stayed active despite being down a team member. They even took to their Instagram account to announce when they would be presenting a new leader. On Aug. 28 Gold Side unveiled their new addition to the leader team. Abi Dewilde joined Brasfield in leading the side for the 2024 season.

"I am thrilled for the opportunity to get deeper into our side with such a passionate and driven team member," Dewilde said.

Both leaders are headed into the year with a positive outlook, despite their recent trials. Their announcement was long-awaited by their "Loyal Golds," and many have expressed their excitement for the upcoming season.

"We are at a good growing point and this will definitely propel us in the right direction," said Brasfield.

City council approves creation of architectual review board

By CADY INABINET, Editor in chief.

Montevallo gained a new city board at the city council's Aug. 28 meeting, where the council approved the creation of an architectural review board.

The new board will review building permits to judge them for architectural appropriateness prior to their construction, specifically focusing on the city's historic architectural elements.

The ordinance outlines that the board will be composed of at least five members, each serving three-year terms, who have been nominated by the mayor and approved by the city council. All members must have backgrounds or experience with architecture, history, urban planning, archeology or law. Members do not have to be Montevallo residents.

Additionally, the ordinance provides a way for the city council to create more architectural review boards in the future if the need arises to. These additional boards would focus on a specific historic property or district, instead of the city as a whole, as a way to alleviate the workload of the main architectural review board.

The ordinance passed with only Council Member Martha Eisenberg voting against it.

In addition to approving this ordinance, the council voted on two other measures during this meeting. The first approved the City of Montevallo's Annual Transportation Plan in accordance with the Rebuild Alabama Act. The second accepted a price increase from the city's garbage collection service provider, Republic Services, for trash pick-up. The new price, which will go into effect for city residents in October, will be $31.

Mayor Rusty Nix also read a proclamation declaring September as Gynecological Cancer Awareness Month, encouraging women in the city to be proactive about screening for gynecological cancer.



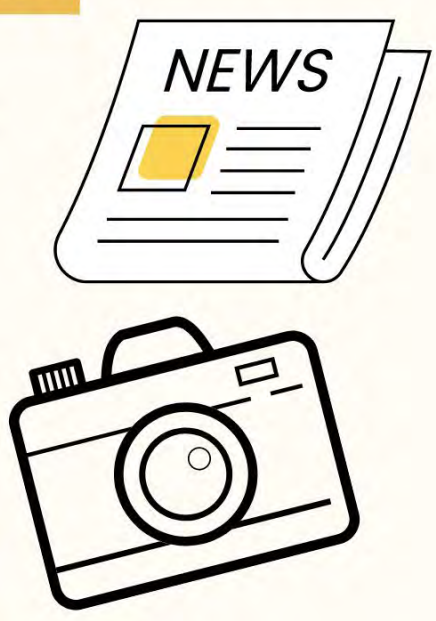
Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

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‘Oppenheimer’: A film I can’t stop watching

By CARTER JAMES.



Promotional matieral for “Oppenheimer.”

I’m obsessed.

As much as I love movies, and I love going to the movies, I only ever see a movie twice in theaters. That’s only if I’m dying to see it again. With “Oppenheimer,” I saw it four times.

There’s a reason I kept going back. Thursday, July 20, was the first time I saw it. Packed in an IMAX theater on opening night and probably the youngest one there, I was beyond excited. The whole experience left me with “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” levels of elation.

It wasn’t my usual good time at the movies, or even how I feel after watching a masterpiece. It was history. It was a significant moment in time, and yet another cornerstone of American pop culture that I had lived through; a feeling that I can still feel today. The best part was that I would be seeing it again the next day.

This was incredibly new for me, because I never rewatch a movie in such a short time, period. Even “The Batman” had a whole day of rest before I ran back to the theater to see it. Where concerns of fatigue would’ve usually gone off in my head, I was gnawing to get back. I wasn’t finished. The first viewing was too overwhelming. I needed it again.

Seeing a movie projected on film was a huge goal of mine, and luckily, the same theater I went to was also showing “Oppenheimer” in 70mm. Not IMAX 70mm, as some may think, but the classic film format.

That 70mm showing was quite a treat. Seeing the flicker of the screen, the cigarette burns and the humming of the projector was a true novelty. Vindication is the only word I can use to describe this rewatch. I knew I had loved the film, but now I could confirm that the movie was a clear-cut masterpiece. That same overbearing feeling was on me once the credits started to roll. There was no doubt in my mind that this film was truly special.

Of course, I was not done. It cannot be understated how much of an experience “Oppenheimer” in IMAX is. You haven’t watched the film yet until that screen towers over you and the subwoofers assault all of your senses. I didn’t want my last theatrical feeling to be in 70mm. I knew I needed it again.

A good ten days have passed, and the initial rush has mostly passed, too. I sit down with my obnoxious amount of popcorn and large drink, and the feeling comes back. Now, I’m ready to absorb as much as possible, and let it all wave over me.

This rewatch was like seeing it in IMAX for the first time again. You truly don’t know what you’re missing until it’s gone. Once the speakers started to shake the entire auditorium, I knew that the film was only ever meant for this format.

Seeing the same movie three times in theaters was already a new record for me. Why a fourth time? Because I needed to catch it one more time before it was gone for good. If it were up to me, films like “Blue Beetle” and “Gran Turismo” would be forced to share times with “Oppenheimer” in IMAX because the people yearn for this experience. It’s evident in the box office and the critical reception.

I already had this film constantly stuck in my head before my fourth viewing. Now, it’s like the film is home to me. The tiniest of moments now hold immense value.

Sure, the Trinity Test is amazing, as well as the monologues and hearings, but now even the most minute character moments are memorable.

What does seeing “Oppenheimer” four times do to you? It gives you too many reasons to love it. It’s no secret that Christopher Nolan is one of my favorite directors. I know his style like the back of my hand. The way he structures narrative, his editing choices, similarities in characters and even the evolution of his overall style are all things I can describe to you ad nauseum. The fascinating thing about “Oppenheimer,” however, is how he uses that style to show a completely different side of himself.

Besides the film being about J. Robert Oppenheimer’s spearheading of the Manhattan Project, the film is a summation of his life in relation to what led to the project, and the personal and political fallout that followed.

This is not your typical biopic or WWII film, but a courtroom drama that is constantly jumping between three timelines to paint a complex picture about a complex figure.

The first act is about Oppenheimer’s past and associations to grasp the extent of his genius and interpersonal troubles. The second act is all about the atomic bomb and how his willingness to make a world-altering breakthrough quickly led to his personal damnation and public condemnation thereafter.

With the third act, however, the film goes full legal drama, dealing with the fallout of his creation and the McCarthy era witch hunt that became an indictment on all fronts of his life.

Crossing parallel with Oppenheimer’s hearings is the story of how Admiral Lewis Strauss was involved with Oppenheimer’s post-war political dealings and eventual downfall. Strauss, played stunningly by Robert Downey Jr., is a jealous and volatile antagonist that bridges the gaps in Oppenheimer’s downfall, as he’s in question of said affairs before being appointed to the presidential cabinet.

Though pieces are constantly moving, the film is still foremost a character study, teeming with depth. No scene is wasted because the character of Oppenheimer constantly develops and unravels as we understand the complex and tortuous world that he made for himself. Cillian Murphy’s brilliance in the titular role goes without saying, as he affects you through the smallest of gestures. Every look means something, and every line reveals all.

The whole cast is putting out career-best performances. They’re all insanely phenomenal and somehow leave an effect on you, even when Oppenheimer is the most important person in and outside of the room. The MVP of the movie is undoubtedly Emily Blunt. She commands every scene she’s in as Oppenheimer’s wife, Kitty, even when she’s at her lowest moments.

Obviously, the story is great. The character work is rich. Nolan directs like he never has before. Everything else though, is where the magic really starts to show. For a film to be three hours long, to have multiple timelines and a decades’ long chronology, amazing directing alone won’t cut it. Where the phenomenal performances and masterful direction hook you, the technical aspects such as writing and editing keep you dialed in.

This is easily Nolan’s best-written film. I can’t wrap my head around writing in first-person, but, man, does it work well. The editing is also crucial in how well this film flows. Not a second drags, but rather it goes like a bullet train. A ton of information is thrown at you, but you are never lost.

The sound and cinematography could have their own articles adjacent to the other aspects that I’ve mentioned. Hoyte Van Hoytema is one of the best cinematographers working today. I want to scrub through every second of this film to figure out the methodology behind the camera movements, shot composition and how a scene is lit.

Sound. I hope everyone that was involved with the sound design and mixing has the best vacation ever, because they outdid themselves. Yes, the film is loud, but the absence of sound also evokes incredible impact.

Don’t think I’ve forgotten about the musical score. I have been listening to it nonstop. How couldn’t I? I listen to film scores on a daily basis. This score is unforgettable and unmissable in the theater. Ludwig Goransson is my favorite composer. He’s insane. The way he uses strings and still implements electronic music into the score is felt in my core. “Fission,” “Can You Hear the Music,” “Fusion” and “Trinity” are my favorite tracks, and will probably be my most listened songs on Spotify this year.

“Oppenheimer” is already one of the best films of the decade, and, honestly, a rewatch away from becoming my favorite of the decade. I don’t see anything reasonably topping this film for me in the next seven years. To call it a blockbuster would be an insult. To call it an event would be an understatement. This is a tried-and-true classic, an epic we haven’t seen the likes of in decades. Every viewing gave me more appreciation for and further vindication of how excellent and important of a piece of cinema this is. Trust me when I say that if given the chance to see it a fifth time in theaters, I’ll do it in a heartbeat. This is my favorite film of the year, if you already couldn’t tell.

10/10 (duh)

‘Barbie’: it’s Greta Gerwig’s world, we’re just living in it

By DREW ROBERTS.



Promotional material for “Barbie.”

There’s been a global pink shortage. “Push” by Matchbox 20 is relevant again. Everyone is raving about Mojo Dojo Casa Houses. It’s been nearly impossible to avoid the phenomenon that is “Barbie.”

While it was easy to expect success from the Mattel-approved, star-studded film, few could’ve predicted what actually happened. “Barbie” isn’t just a movie; it’s a cinematic tour-de-force, a hot pink tidal wave shattering box office records with each passing week.

This is due to a number of factors: Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling in leading roles, the presence of genuine comedy in a film landscape dominated by lazy, quippy MCU products and its odd opening day pairing with Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer.” None of these reasons, however, capture what will make “Barbie” a hot commodity on streaming services for years to come. What makes “Barbie” not just good, but great, is the vision of Greta Gerwig, one of the finest filmmakers working today.

The film starts with an homage to Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 masterpiece, “2001: A Space Odyssey.” It takes an iconic scene, that of apes huddled around a monolith and discovering the killing power of a bone, and changes it. There are little girls instead of apes, dolls instead of bones and a 50-foot Robbie instead of a monolith. This seems like a message directly from Gerwig. For far too long the art of filmmaking has been a boys club. The title “director” conjures up plenty of images: Martin Scorsese going over lines with Robert DeNiro, Stephen Spielberg lying in the shark’s mouth on the set of “Jaws,” Alfred Hitchcock standing menacingly in one of his signature suits. Men have dominated the canon of film for quite some time. Things are changing, however. Now, when I think of a director, I’ll think of Gerwig in her pink jumpsuit crafting a cinematic experience unlike any other that I’ve seen.

To start, “Barbie” is fun. How refreshing is that? Few films have the courage to commit to the bit as much as this one does. Barbie Land looks both plastic and fantastic. Robbie’s heels don’t touch the ground. She floats down from the roof of her house like any Barbie would. You get a sense that no expense was spared on set or in the script.

Much of the joy comes from Gosling’s performance as Ken. I’ve maintained for a long time that Gosling is one of the best comedic actors working today. His performances in “The Nice Guys” and “Crazy Stupid Love” are enough to prove this. Ken is the highlight of the film, especially when he’s singing. I catch myself humming “I’m Just Ken” more often than I’d like to admit. Gosling brings his A-game here, and I wouldn’t be surprised to see him with an Oscar nomination come next spring.

Interestingly enough, the very thing that won the most people over is also drawing the most criticism. In the film, Ken comes to embody a type of masculinity that has widely been dubbed as toxic, and for good reason; it’s bad for him and everyone around him. The film takes playful jabs at this form of masculinity. How it causes men to mansplain high-brow cinema to women, show them the basics of any given sport or trap them in a one-sided sing-a-long session with far too much eye contact. As a man, I laughed at all of these moments, and I could tell they came from a place of genuine frustration.

Many men online, however, did not appreciate this. They took it as a personal insult, saying that the film was anti-man. To this, I must ask, is that all it means to be a man? I’m speaking to my fellow Kens here. Must we always have our Barbies serve us? Are our identities formed by how well we can attract Barbies? Must we fight other Kens that we perceive as a threat? I don’t think so, and the film agrees with me.

In the end, Ken finds his own identity separate from Barbie. In a heartfelt conversation with the woman he’s been trying to win over he says, “But it’s ‘Barbie and Ken.’ There is no just ‘Ken.’” Barbie sees his pain, and reassures him, saying, “Maybe it’s time to discover who Ken is. Maybe it’s Barbie, and it’s Ken.”

It does feel a little silly to fight criticisms of this movie, though. Money talks, and as of my writing this, “Barbie” has made over $1 billion globally at the box office. It’s the highest grossing film from a female director as well as the highest grossing Warner Bros. film, beating out Nolan’s “The Dark Knight.” The making of a “Barbie” sequel is not a matter of if, but when.

As I alluded to earlier, this unbridled success is not due to any studio decisions or connection to a larger franchise: it’s because of Gerwig. She made a film for women, a market that has been horribly underserved by Hollywood, and managed to capture the attention of the entire world. I’d also like to give a shoutout to her partner Noah Baumbach, who co-wrote the script.

I’ve been a Gerwig fan for quite some time. Her debut feature “Lady Bird” is in my top 5 films of all time. Her sophomore effort “Little Women” stands tall among movies like “Parasite,” “Knives Out” and “Once Upon A Time In Hollywood,” all of which came out in the same year. To round things out, “Barbie” is my favorite film of the year so far.

What do all of these have in common? They have a heart and depth of humanity I don’t see in most films. I’ve probably watched “Lady Bird” around seven times. Every time I get to the airport scene — if you’ve seen it you know what I’m talking about — my heart aches with a special sort of anguish. I plan on rewatching “Little Women” as soon as the leaves turn orange. I’ve been dying to hear Saoirse Ronan deliver the impassioned monologue that earned her an Oscar nomination a second time. As for “Barbie,” I’ve seen it twice, and each time the pained piano keys of Billie Eilish’s “What Was I Made For?” played, chills ran across my body.

“Barbie” is fun, yes, but it’s also real. Its moving ending makes you think about how terrible and beautiful life is. I know this caught many off guard, but if you’ve seen any of Gerwig’s filmography, it’s no surprise. “Barbie,” along with everything else she’s made, is something not only to watch, but to feel. I’ve thought about “Barbie” a lot over the past few weeks. I don’t see that changing. Sometime soon, I’ll don pink again and enter the magic of Barbie Land, all the while seeing the wonder of my own world.

9.8/10

UM's first ever wrestling coach hopes to cultivate supportive, hands-on team

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Coach Daniel Ownbey, the University of Montevallo's first men's wrestling coach in its history, carries a trove of achievements.

For example, he is a four-time All-American wrestling national champion. He also won one hundred and ten out of one hundred and eleven wrestling matches in his senior year of high school. But, despite his wide array of awards, he hopes to cultivate a community that is focused on support for his athletes.

Ownbey, originally from Asheville, N.C., was first introduced to wrestling in the second grade by his dad, who took him to a wrestling gym to watch a practice.

"I wrestled for two years but unfortunately I broke my arm and was out of sports for a couple of years," he said.

His recovery was preceded by a two-week hospital stay, eight surgeries and two years of metal plates and screws in his arm. This didn't stop Ownbey from wrestling, though.

Dan Gable, an American professional wrestler, came to Ownbey's hometown to do a wrestling clinic while he was in the fifth grade, right at the time that he was able to play sports again. Ownbey attended the clinic and has been wrestling ever since.

"Ever since then I've fallen in love with the sport," he said.

Aside from his own successful wrestling career, Ownbey was the head coach of men's wrestling at Wheeling University in Wheeling, W.Va. and assistant coach at Newberry College in Newberry, S.C. Now the head coach of men's wrestling at UM, Ownbey is excited to bring more wrestling to the South.

Ownbey said, "I'm not from Alabama, but being from North Carolina, wrestling in the southeast is still growing and we'd be the first Division II school in the state of Alabama. So, just the idea of growing the sport back down here is a great appeal."

"Wrestling for your home state has a certain amount of pride," he added.

So far this season, Ownbey is enjoying the support he is receiving from campus, especially from Mark Richard, UM's Athletic Director, and Dr. John Stewart, UM's president. When asked what he is most looking forward to this season, Ownbey responded, "Packing out the SAC. I want to get it to where it's standing room only."

For someone who has never watched wrestling or is curious about the sport, Ownbey says, "Just know that it's going to be an exciting event. I know a lot of people don't know a lot about wrestling, however, in the grand scheme of things, it's not that hard to follow. It's got a lot of excitement to it, it's got a lot of quick action, a lot of big slams, if people are into that."

Support for the wrestling team is extremely important to Ownbey. He said, "What I love about Division II is that every single student athlete matters. No matter if you're the four-time All-American superstar or whether you're the kid who's the superstar in the classroom making a 4.0, every single kid matters and every single kid can help your program get better, no matter if it's on or off the mat."



UM's new wrestling coach, Daniel Ownbey. Photo courtesy of Ownbey.

Ownbey also values the input from his team, saying, "Being a brand new program, and yes, I'm the head coach and this is technically, quote, my program; however, it's just as much their program as it is mine."

For those interested in wrestling at UM, Ownbey said, "The quicker you buy in, the better you're going to be. Whether it's buying into the coaching style or buying into our academic expectations, the quicker you buy into your coaches, the sky's the limit on how good you can be or how fun your experience at the university will be."

Coach Ownbey had one more thing to say: "Go Falcons!"

UM Athletics volleyball and basketball to be streamed on FloSports

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

The Gulf South Conference has announced that men's and women's volleyball and basketball will now be streamed on FloSports for this upcoming regular season. But, the addition of streaming has proven to be both beneficial and difficult to the production team and athletic fans who have to adjust to these changes.

FloSports is a streaming platform that gives viewers live access to multiple college sports on platforms like Roku, Apple TV, Fire TV, IOS and Chromecast. FloSports started its partnership with the Gulf South Conference in the fall 2020.

Prior to this fall semester, all Montevallo athletic events were live-streamed by the Mass Communication Department on YouTube. Now, volleyball and men's and women's basketball will be behind a paywall on FloSports. FloSports offers subscriptions of $14.99 a month or $99.99 for a year. There is a discount available that gives students a $9.99 per month option.

One concern raised by UM athletic fans is the price of this subscription. The University of Montevallo is a Division II school, so student-athletes are rarely awarded full-ride scholarships. Diana Smith, a fan of UM athletics, expressed her concern that parents and friends of these players now have to pay to watch their loved ones play.

"If you want a fanbase, they're going to have to pay," she said. This could arise as an ongoing problem of UM Athletics losing their fanbase.

Dr. Jay Cofield, a broadcast production professor in the Mass Communication Department, makes sure that these broadcasts run smoothly. Cofield said streaming games on FloSports ramps up expectations of their usual broadcast production.

"It would be a little bit more difficult in that we actually have to play FloSports commercials at certain times," Cofield said. "We can't just sit there and not do anything during the timeouts."

FloSports is also a network television business, which increases the expectation for broadcast quality.

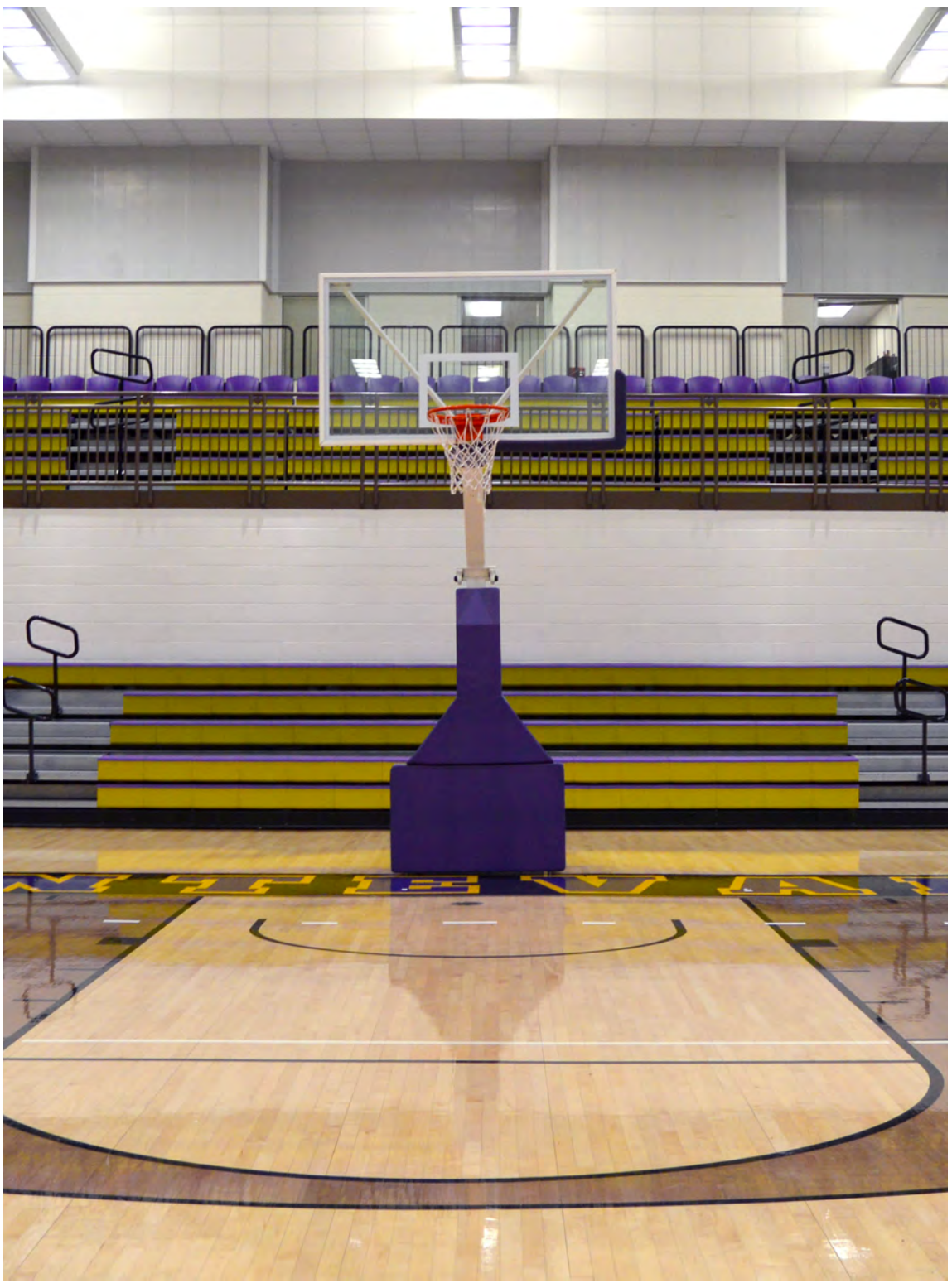
Producing athletic events for FloSports is a great way for students to get involved, Cofield said. Mass communication students who have experience from their classes are preferred for higher-level broadcast positions such as graphics operator or replay operator. Other students are welcome to get involved to earn production credit or on a volunteer basis.

FloSports also creates opportunities for UM students to get paid for their work.

"We also, this fall, because of FloSports, are going to be creating some new paid positions on the crew like a graphic operator, replay operator, and the road producer," said Cofield. "So we're really excited about that because in the past we had maybe one or two paid positions where now, we'll be able to do that as a job."

One thing Cofield is most excited about this new way of broadcast production is the ability to be more professional with the production.

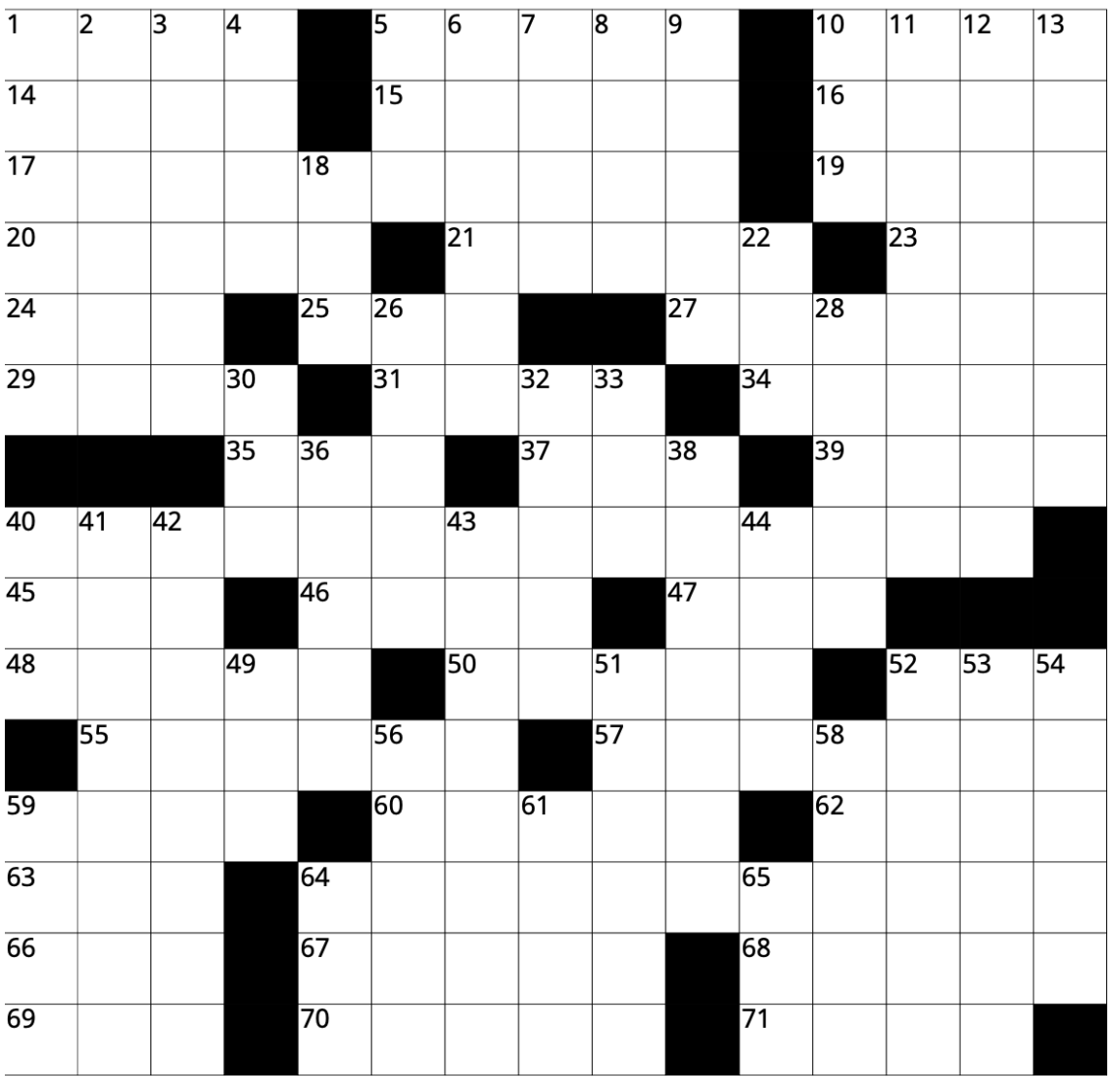
"We actually have a way to pay people and make sure it's worth their dollar," he said.



Basketball court. Photo by Anna Grace Askelson.

Crossword

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content.



Across:

1. Sound of shock
5. Chocolatey Starbucks order
10. Widespread
14. Retired professor, abbr.
15. Heath's "Brokeback Mountain" character
16. Edinburgh native
17. Expensive wrist-wear
19. Spanish "will be"
20. Teary-eyed
21. Latin bears
23. Bio. or chem.
24. Root beer brand
25. Teenager's woe
27. Matthew or Mark
29. Creature that purrs in Peru
31. Silent signals
34. HBO dramedy "The _____ Lotus"
35. "Ride the Dragon" singer ___ Twigs
37. Dead letters
39. Experts
40. Eighth president
45. Reddit Q&A
46. "Ocean Man" band
47. Avg.
48. Artist Kusama known as the "High Priestess of Polka Dots"
50. Cartoon wallaby with a modern life
52. "Have You Ever Seen the Rain" singer Stewart
55. Kidnapper's demand
57. Put on a pedestal
59. Brazilian soccer legend
60. Having bumps
62. What your dog gives you when you ask to shake
63. Braves, on a scoreboard
64. Where you bought songs for you iPod
66. Numbered hwy.
67. Univ. military programs
68. Long-limbed
69. Whole lot
70. Tiny laugh
71. Fútbol cheer

Down:

1. "Lady Bird" director Greta
2. Single-celled organism
3. Pick
4. Type of school
5. Cat call
6. Working without thinking
7. Shortened middle
8. Juicebox drinks
9. Haircut that a 60s teenager might request
10. Blog feed letters
11. "Munch" writer
12. Rush "Hold Your Fire" single
13. Prima ballerinas
18. Alphabet finale
22. Plant seeds
26. Pointless
28. Glass fragment
30. Frequently, in verse
32. Clog-clearing brand
33. Sloth, e.g.
36. Fuzzy fruits
38. Airer of "Arthur"
40. New Jersey cape
41. Almond-flavored liqueur
42. Former Celtics three-point star
43. Fortified wine
44. Text response to someone telling you to have a nice day
49. Washington's bill
51. John of Monty Python
52. Way to allude to cutting the cheese
53. Arkansas's range
54. "Malcom in the Middle" brother
56. How ballerinas dance
58. Birth-related
59. Actor's goal
61. Band behind 2015 radio hit "Cake by the Ocean"
64. NYC subway
65. ___-mo

Scan for answers!

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

Aries:
Have you been feeling like you've been having an out of body experience lately, Aries? Maybe this is a good thing—it's an overused phrase, but perhaps your life has felt like a movie as of late. Maybe this is a bad thing—you might feel disconnected from yourself. Just make sure you take time to analyze how you're feeling.

Taurus:
You should start a fight club, Taurus. I'm not advocating for violence here; I just think it would be good for you to be in a David Fincher-type situation right now. Mostly you just need a change of pace and a little bit of excitement, and starting a fight club just seemed like the most effective way to do that to me.

Gemini:
You've been putting something off, Gemini. Procrastinating is only fun in the short term, unfortunately. Make a to do list today and be sure to check a few boxes off so you don't live to regret getting behind on your readings for class.

Cancer:
Call your mom, Cancer. Or some figure equivalent to your mother if you're not really close to your mom like that. She'll be happy to hear from you and you'll feel better after talking to here, so it's really a win-win situation.

Leo:
Engage in metaphor, Leo. Be esoteric. The minute someone acts like they know what you're talking about, get even more obscure. Just don't let anyone catch your drift.

Virgo:
Are you even actually reading this, Virgo? Why are you getting advice from me? You, presumably, do not even know me. You need to do some deep soul-searching and inner reflection before you come to strangers looking for advice.

Libra:
Get really into archaeology, Libra. Visit museums! Read up on everything! Dig in the dirt and pretend you're at an archaeological dig site! Go dig in the dirt at an actual archaeological dig site if you have those kinds of connections!

Scorpio:
Burn all of your bridges, Scorpio. Start fresh. You've become stagnant and you need a dramatic change. I won't say you won't regret it, but at least it might be fun.

Sagittarius:
Develop a thicker skin, Sagittarius. You've been taking everything personally lately. It's hard not to center yourself, but sometimes things aren't about you and that's okay too.

Capricorn:
Go down a Wikipedia rabbit hole, Capricorn. You'll find your great new passion in life approximately 15 tabs into it.

Aquarius:
Get lost, Aquarius! I mean this in a Beat poet type of way. You should have a Jack Kerouac-style journey soon. Go where the road takes you and document everything with varying degrees of accuracy.

Pisces:
It's time for you to be in your Frank O'Hara era, Pisces. Channel your inner "Having a Coke with You" and tell someone you love them without really outright saying it. No promises they'll get the message, but one can always hope they will.

Submit a letter to the editor

The Alabamian accepts letters to be considered for publication in its opinions section. Writing a letter to the editor can be an outlet for you as a reader to express your thoughts, feelings or concerns about any issue you care about. If you want to submit a letter to the editor, here's what you should know:

- The Alabamian takes letters from any source, including those not associated with the university.
- Letters should not exceed 1000 words and may be edited for grammar, length and style. Letters will not be edited for content without the author's permission. All letters should include the applicant's name, occupation, major (if student) and address.
- The Alabamian will publish most submissions from students, faculty or staff, but final decisions are up to the editor in chief. Letters submitted from those not affiliated with the university should expect higher scrutiny and will only be published if they are particularly relevant to the community or a current issue. The Alabamian reserves the right not to publish any letter.
- To submit a letter, email The Alabamian at alabamian@montevallo.edu. Letters should have "Letter to the editor" in the subject line.
- Please send the letter as a Word document. Any information that you do not wish to be part of the letter itself, such as reasons why you believe the letter to be relevant, should be included in the body of the email, not the letter itself.

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UM offering increased family leave

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Determining when to have children or how to afford to miss time at work due to a family or medical emergency is a strategic art. It requires calculations—it takes extensive financial and social planning. To ease the tensions that come from family and medical-related planning, the University of Montevallo passed a policy in May that offers eight weeks of paid family and medical leave.

Currently, 8 to 12 weeks of unpaid leave is a general standard under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, and it is what a majority of college institutions follow. UM still utilizes this policy, but eight weeks of leave will now be paid.

Faculty who have completed at least one academic year of work, or two consecutive semesters, and staff who have completed at least 1250 hours of work within the preceding year are eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.

The policy allows for eight weeks of paid leave for the birth of a child, adoption of a child under the age of 18, placement of a foster child, miscarriage or any pregnancy-related medical emergencies. UM's new policy is also parent-focused, meaning that both the mother and father are eligible.

2022 Faculty Senate President Dr. Claire Edwards, of the Department of Communication Science and Disorders, who facilitated the creation and passing of the new policy, emphasized that the end result was truly a collaborative effort.

"It wasn't just one person. It was a collaborative effort between Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and administration to create this policy," Edwards said.

Development of the policy began in fall 2022, and it was approved the following spring at the May 3 Board of Trustees meeting. Initially, 12 weeks of paid leave was suggested, but, after negotiations, eight weeks of leave were passed.

"We had a lot of great people working on it, and so they were very determined and everybody was invested because it not only helped faculty, but it also helped staff. And so, it's pretty much helping all faculty and staff, all university employees," said Edwards.

Edwards, explained that multiple influences were considered. Federal policy, policies at other liberal arts institutions in Alabama and even policy at international institutions were utilized.

In regard to standards and the initial proposal of the policy, Edwards said, "Initially, we wanted 12 weeks—just because that is one of the standards that happens in lots of places. And, in fact, we also looked at other countries and places like Sweden—they have amazing policies. We're trying to model that, and so we came in at 12 weeks and then we kind of realized that maybe that wasn't sustainable, maybe that wasn't as fiscally responsible, and so, then we kind of amended it to more of an eight weeks—is where we landed finally."

Edwards believes that, although 12 weeks of paid leave was proposed, eight weeks of paid leave is a step in the right direction. Faculty and staff at UM no longer have to consider how many sick days they have left to plan for the birth of a child or consider potential medical emergencies that may occur. The policy has the opportunity to grow and extend in the future, though.

UM's policy is also unique in that it covers adoption, miscarriage and placement of a foster child while prioritizing both parents.

Edwards said, "And it also is for adoptions and foster placements as well. The other thing is it's not maternal leave, it's parent leave. So, if you are the spouse of the person who is physically having a child, then you get that benefit."

Overall, Edwards said, "This policy helped bring staff and faculty together in a way that hasn't been achieved in my time here at the university."

Dr. Ray Ozley, chair of the Department of Communication at UM, also served a role in the development and passing of the new policy.

Ozley said, "I was serving as the chair of the Faculty Senate personnel handbook committee and we had some other tasks that we were going to work on and had heard that Staff Senate was really concerned and wanting this— and some faculty had requested it before, and it was a natural assignment to our committee. That's kind of where it landed in my lap. I also had served the previous year as Faculty Senate President, so I had some of the relationships and connections in place to be able and try to talk about it."

Ozley played a key role in listening to the desires of faculty and staff in regard to family and medical leave, saying, "As chair of the committee, I collaborated with my committee members and with the representatives of Staff Senate to just seek understanding of what people wanted—and then I kind of coordinated convening meetings with various representatives and also with administration."



Photo by Klara Kulikova, Upsplash.com.

Understanding what would best benefit faculty and staff was important to Ozley and his co-workers, but he also emphasized that the Department of Human Resources, the university's attorney, UM President Dr. John Stewart, department chairs and other administrators were included in the process to provide a wide array of discussion and feedback.

Ozley emphasized different benefits of the policy other than paid leave, focusing on Montevallo's culture and the long term success of faculty and staff.

"There is research to support that when you address these types of needs you have less stress and burnout in the workplace. So, even if we're not talking about recruitment and retention of employees, productivity increases when you don't have to worry about stuff like this," he said.

In regard to the culture and community of UM, Ozley said, "This is a piece of what I hope is a larger ongoing puzzle to continue making Montevallo a stronger culture— strengthening the relationships between staff and faculty."

Peace and justice studies program presents 'Ukraine: War and Resistance'

By M.K. BRYANT.

The University of Montevallo's Peace and Justice Studies program partnered with the Fulbright Ukraine Program to present a photo exhibit highlighting the works of Ukrainian photographers and American photographers who have lived in Ukraine for several years. The exhibit is housed in Carmichael Library.

Described as a traveling exhibit, versions of "Ukraine: War and Resistance" have also been done at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for Media at Risk, University of Minnesota and in Berlin. It was first displayed in 2022 at the Museum of the City of Vinnystia in Ukraine. Photographers featured include J.T Blatty, Alexey Furman, Brendan Hoffman, Serhii Korovayny, Joseph Sywenkyj, Emine Ziyatdinova and Oksana Parafeniuk. All of the photographers, except for Parafeniuk, are Fulbright alumni. Parafeniuk is a former employee of the Fulbright Ukraine Program.

According to its website, the Fulbright Program is an "international program for exchange of scholars and students" that was established in 1946. It was established in Ukraine in 1992, following Ukraine's independence in 1991. Since then, it has allowed hundreds of Ukrainians to travel to the United States, as well as hundreds of Americans to travel to Ukraine.

Although this was the first art exhibit that the PJS program has presented, they have worked on many other projects in the past. These projects include a criminal justice reform panel and a discussion of poetry, peace and justice with poet Elizabeth Hughey.

Co-coordinator of the University's PJS program, Dr. Jennifer Rickel, said the program initially got involved with the photography project in spring 2023, when a member of Fulbright Program Ukraine and the Institute of International Education in their Kyiv Office reached out about the exhibit. Rickel said that the project was a group effort.

"Dr. Catherine Walsh in the art department is a member of our PJS committee, and she was indispensable in curating the version of the exhibit that is currently on display at UM," Rickel said.



"Ukraine: War and Resistance" exhibit at Carmichael Library. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms.

She also credited professors of art Colin Williams and Misty Bennett, as well as Dr. Charlotte Ford and Mike Price of the Carmichael Library as being vital in putting the exhibit together.

"Our PJS program prioritizes partnerships—we appreciate working with organizations involved in peace and justice issues, and we're able to coordinate across campus fairly well because the PJS committee is comprised of faculty, staff and students from across the disciplines," Rickel said.

The exhibit will be displayed on the first floor of Carmichael Library until Oct. 5.

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Letter from the editor: It's all downhill from here

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

I don't consider myself a pessimist at all. In fact, when asked to describe myself, optimistic is usually one of my go-to adjectives.

To some, I know optimism can feel a bit naïve and oblivious—bad stuff happens all the time, right? But, to me, optimism is the answer to the bad stuff that happens. If I believe that there's good around the corner, then there will be because I'll make sure that I work towards that good. At the very least, optimism has kept me willing to keep walking around corners to see if the other side is better.

Lately, however, it feels like I can't help but give in to habitual dystopian thinking. Dystopian thinking is a phenomenon that I've noticed myself engaging with and decided to coin a term for that is similar to the act of catastrophizing, the act of fixating on the worst likely outcome in a situation even if that outcome is unrealistic, but with a heavier emphasis on a sense of resigned nihilism. Dystopian thinking is anxiety at its worst for me. I don't even feel like me, like a real person, I just feel like a collection of my worst attributes, moments and fears.

After receiving some nice compliments on the first two of these letters that I wrote, I joked that I had peaked with those and that it was all downhill from here on out. It was a joke, sure, but how much was I really joking? Part of me really felt like I had already written everything worth writing—that every attempt at writing a meaningful letter would result in pretentious, pointless, meandering, derivative drivel that would make me and this publication widely hated by readers everywhere. It sounds a bit dramatic when I write it out like that, but that's the magic of dystopian thinking—the future becomes distorted until all your worst fears seemingly become your fate.

I feel like we don't talk about fear often enough. Fear is, by and large, taboo. To be afraid is to have some sort of weakness and, therefore, to be vulnerable—which is, in and of itself, terrifying. So, instead, we just try not to talk about being afraid, and, as a result, we're still afraid, but only in our private, interior lives.

Not talking about fear feels detrimental to me, though. By not talking about fear, you're left to assume that nobody else is ever afraid and that you're the odd one out— creating a sense of isolation that can only exacerbate any feelings of fear and anxiety you already have. If we talked about fear a little bit more, maybe it wouldn't feel quite as scary.

So, the truth is, I'm afraid of everything. Well, that's a bit of a hyperbole. I don't think I'm actually afraid of everything, but I'm certainly afraid of a lot of things a lot of the time. Big dogs that bark, getting Lyme disease, hospitals, being forgotten by everyone I love, hypnotists. You name it and there's a solid one-in-three chance that I fear it.

You, dear reader, probably scare me most of all. I put a lot of myself into working on The Alabamian. This paper is something that I am truly passionate about. The idea that readers—literally, the only reason that we publish The Alabamian in the first place—could read something I've worked on and hate it, hate something that I poured myself into, places me in a very vulnerable position. I'm really setting myself up for getting my heart broken again and again, which is enough to make me want to go hide in a hole and never show my face outside ever again.

So, maybe it really is all downhill from here. Maybe the first letter I wrote will be my best and I'm just spinning my wheels writing this. Maybe all my dystopian thinking is true and there will be a campus-wide effort to unseat me as Editor in Chief just so no one ever has to read one of these letters ever again and I will be shunned forever for being a horrible pseudo-intellectual.

Or maybe the real problem is that I haven't taken the time to call my feelings what they are: fear. I think my reaction to being afraid of something is akin to touching a hot stove—pull away before it hurts too bad. Never let the feeling linger and try your best to never think about it. But, if I took the time to analyze my fears, I would find that most of them are confrontable. Hospitals are just buildings. I can be proactive and avoid getting Lyme disease. Hypnotists aren't even real.

The first step to solving a problem is admitting you have a problem. The first step to not being afraid anymore is actually being afraid. So here I am admitting it openly: reader, I am afraid. Of you. Of this paper. Of most things in this world. And that's okay, I'm working through it.

The problem with movie theaters

By CARTER JAMES.

I'm a movie theater addict.

I've gone 45 times this year. That's usually my average at the end of the year. Movie theaters are my third space. Regardless of the movie being good or bad, the experience is still great. Lately, the experience has wavered. While I'm not saying that experience has turned for the worse, there are things that I'm annoyed about.

Most films nowadays are formatted in two aspect ratios. 2.39:1 is the aspect ratio we all think of when we picture movies—widescreen with black bars at the top and bottom. That's not the only widescreen aspect ratio, however; 1.85:1 is also a standard aspect ratio. This nearly fills the screen with tiny black bars at the top and bottom. This was the most common American aspect ratio when films went from the letterboxed ratio, 1.33:1/4:3 to widescreen. 2.39:1 and 1.85:1 are the ratios that you'll find at your local multiplex theater.

Aspect ratio has always been a thing that has jumped out to me as a movie goer and film buff in general. When I was as young as 3 years old, I would have problems with how a film is formatted. 4:3 TVs had to have a movie completely fill up the TV, or I would have a problem. Eventually, I came to respect and appreciate films being presented on home media in their original aspect ratio as I grew older and would hate when cable TV would stretch a film to fit the screen.

Between the three theaters I go to, all of them have had problems with showing movies on the right screen. At first it was just movies in 1.85:1 being shown on 2.39:1 screens, making it look like 4:3 in my mind. Now, just about every movie I go see does not have the proper formatting.

In the month of August, I saw 12 films. Six of them I had problems with. My rewatch of "Barbie" was met with the film not only being shown on the incorrect screen, but it also looked like I was watching the film on my phone. Another weird new thing I've started to notice is a 2.39:1 movie on the right screen but formatted to where there's a black bar on one side. This happened to me when I rewatched "Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Pt. 1" at the Amstar 14 in Alabaster and when I saw a re-release of "Oldboy" at AMC Classic Lee Branch 15 in Oak Mountain.

These cases are a part of the ever-growing carelessness for projection at multiplex theaters. I wish gripes with aspect ratios were the least of my issues now, but the projectors themselves are starting to have issues.

When I saw "Gran Turismo," I was there for an extra 15 minutes because the IMAX projector was failing to properly work. At first, trailers started showing with just audio and no picture. I got up and told the staff at AMC Patton Creek 15 in Hoover about it. For the next 10 minutes, a picture saying "remember to silence your phone + enjoy the movie" was acompanied by music. I got up and told them about that. When I got back, trailers with no picture played again.

Eventually, they had to come in and tell me and the only other patron there that they would be restarting the projector. It took all the way up until the studio credits started playing for the screen to actually show the movie. I was relieved that the IMAX screen at least was formatted correctly; a problem I would face two out of the three times I saw "Oppenheimer" in the format.

That's not even the worst theater experience I've had this year, though. That goes to my first viewing of "Barbie," where the screen had a faux 3D effect the entire time. Mind you, this was on the biggest non-IMAX screen at the AMC in Hoover.

But, this problem is not exclusive to just my bad luck. Because my friend started going to the movies more often, I convinced him to get AMC Stubs A-List. Nearly every week since then, he has told me about numerous problems with screens, ranging from the aspect ratio to the screen having a purple filter.

Movie theater tickets are already too expensive as is for careless mistakes to become a regular occurrence. I'm glad I have AMC Stubs A-List because I would lament having to spend $15-$20 for a single ticket just for my movie to have the same quality control as trying to project from your backyard.

The next step, especially for AMC theaters, is to train your employees to care about projection. Projectionism is a lost art. Multiplexes have long had only had one employee that is in charge of looking over all the projectors for their theaters, but it now seems like it's more of a problem for the public than it is a convenience for the staff.

Even with all of these grievances and the lack of audience etiquette I've seen within the past few years, I still enjoy going to the movies. Now, the next time I go and see a problem, I'll make sure to tell the staff. Hopefully after reading this article, and maybe even thinking about the problems you've seen at your theater, you'll tell the staff to fix things you see in the future. If we want the theatrical experience to be alive for the coming generations, the theaters themselves should care about making that experience worthwhile.

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Faculty Senate discuss senior grades, academic advising, honoring Forrester

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

The University of Montevallo Faculty Senate held their second meeting of the 2023-24 school year on Sept. 8. Among topics of discussion were potential ways of honoring late UM philosophy professor Dr. Stefan Forrester.

Measures discussed included establishing a Faculty Senate service award named in Forrester's honor to be given to outstanding Faculty Senate members. Forrester up until his death was heavily involved in Faculty Senate. The senate agreed to outline specifics of the award at future meetings.

Political science professor Dr. Andrea Eckelman also said some SGA members are interested in naming a room in Humanities Hall after Forrester— likely, his favorite classroom, Room 308.

Eckelman also discussed on behalf of the Academic Policies Committee changes to be made to a survey sent out to students last semester regarding graduating senior finals policies.

Unlike at most universities, UM students receive their diplomas on stage at graduation instead of by mail afterwards. This means that graduating seniors must have their final grades in earlier than other students to allow professors to finalize grades before graduation day.

This policy has generated concern among students and faculty. Many feel that having to complete finals early puts unneeded stress on graduating seniors.

A survey was sent to seniors, juniors and graduate students last semester regarding their opinions on receiving their diplomas by mail, removing the need to complete finals before other students.

However, this survey garnered concern from the senate regarding its lack of senate involvement, poor response rate, unclear language and potentially leading questions.

During the meeting, a revised version of the survey was given to the senate for review.

Eckelman announced that she had been meeting with SGA regarding the survey. Eckelman said that SGA President, Colton Rodano, had discussed the possibility of sending the survey from his email to improve the response rate.

Social worker professor Dr. Meredith Tetloff expressed support for sending the survey through the SGA President's email, saying that it would emphasize that the survey was a student-led initiative.

Eckelman also discussed with the senate the possibility of invoking a committee of the whole. Committee of the whole as defined by Robert's Rules of Order, the manual of parliamentary procedure used by Faculty Senate, is an option which if invoked means all outside visitors to the senate would have to leave the meeting until the senate allows them to return.

This procedure can be invoked at any time during meetings however the senate discussed the possibility of making it a common practice for the Faculty Senate agenda to have a designated time for committee of the whole. No policy making committee of the whole a common practice was made during the meeting.

"We've had lots of other visitors that come for the whole meeting, and we do occasionally need to discuss sensitive business" said Eckelman, "but what we also don't want to do is close our meetings."

If committee of the whole is invoked, minutes from the meeting during that time must still be made public.

During her President's Report Faculty Senate President Dr. Catherine Walsh shared several updates from the UM Executive Cabinet meeting held on Sept. 1, her meeting with Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Courtney Bentley and her meeting with UM President Dr. John Stewart.

Among updates from the Executive Cabinet meeting, Walsh announced that searches are underway for deans for the College of Fine Arts and the Nursing Program.

Walsh announced that, as of the Executive Cabinet meeting, UM Dual Enrollment for the 2023-24 school year was at 840 students. Walsh also said that as of the end of move in day, 2,944 students were enrolled at UM.

An ad hoc committee for the evaluation of teaching review was discussed and voted on during the meeting.

The goal of this committee will be learning more about current teaching review practices at UM, including course and peer evaluations and working to adjust those practices for greater accuracy and fairness.

"What we envisioned is a model that is flexible and not prescriptive but that can be adapted across departments," said Walsh.

This committee will include five to six members. Members will include at least one member of the Faculty Senate Executive and Governance Committee, at least one faculty member from each college and one faculty member from the library. Members will be appointed by the provost upon recommendation from Faculty Senate.

The senate voted unanimously to approve the creation of the committee. Tetloff volunteered to chair the committee prior to the meeting, and is expected to be named chair once the committee is populated.

Walsh said that during their 2023-24 session, UM Staff Senate would be looking at revising their staff salary policy and merit pay system, as well as implementing more collaboration between Staff and Faculty Senates.

Walsh also announced that she and Staff Senate are in the beginning phases of finding new ways to promote social interaction between faculty and staff.

The senate briefly discussed the difficulties of getting announcements in advance regarding when members of UM's Outdoor Scholars program will be out of class. As the Outdoor Scholars and Bass Fishing Team are not members of the NCAA, they do not have consistent updates sent to teachers regarding future absences like NCAA teams do.

Walsh announced on behalf of the Executive and Governance committee, which she is chair of, that they will be reviewing the Faculty Constitution and Bylaws during their 2023-24 session.

Similarly, Personnel and Handbook Committee chair Dr. Brendan Beal announced that the committee would be continuing revisions to the Faculty Handbook began by Dr. Ray Ozley during his time on the committee.

Faculty Senate is set to meet again on Oct. 13 in Reynolds Hall's Merrill Room.

New faces in the Mass Communication Department

By DREW ROBERTS.

After the departure of several faculty members over the past few years, the Mass Communication Department has hired three new professors. Though their backgrounds and areas of expertise vary, all share a common goal of connecting with students and preparing them for success.

The mass communication major is divided into two concentrations: broadcast production, focusing on the technical aspects of mass communication, and multimedia journalism, which leans more towards writing.

On the multimedia journalism side of things, Dr. Samantha Kocan has joined the department and is excited to engage with students. After five years of working as a TV reporter and anchor, she discovered her love of teaching. She went on to earn a Master's degree in strategic communication. Following this, she earned a Ph.D. in journalism and mass communication from the University of Alabama.

By weaving her industry experience into classroom lectures, Kocan hopes to set her students up for success.

"I feel like there's only so much that a student can learn from a textbook," Kocan said, "and you learn more when you're in the field, so being able to bring that experience in the classroom is going to better prepare my students for future careers in journalism."

Much of Kocan's research involves the mental health of journalists, an aspect of the industry she hopes to emphasize in the classroom.

"I don't think mental health is talked about enough in the industry," she said. "You're expected to work long hours, weekends and holidays. There's really not much time to prioritize your mental health, so I think teaching the students ways to navigate the industry is really going to help them in the long run."

For the broadcast production concentration, there have been two new hires. The first is professor Logan Freeman, who is helping to develop the digital filmmaking minor into a major.

"[It's] a lot of pressure, but luckily, it's fun," he said. "Luckily there's a lot of really good faculty to support [it]. I get to come in and help students get weird."

With a few short films under his belt, a Master of Fine Arts in digital art with a focus on film directing from Emerson College and experience working in Boston, Los Angeles and New York, Freeman has plenty of experience behind the camera. In the classroom, however, he hopes to help students tell stories with or without it.

"I think anybody can learn the technical aspects," he said, "but you have to nurture what it means to be a storyteller, so you have to figure out what is your best mode of storytelling, and that's different for people. It's a different voice. You don't just tell stories in one medium."

The second hire is professor Kaley Martin, who is a UM alumna. Martin is an Emmy-winning documentarist and has worn many hats in the media world: social media, sports and corporate branding, to name a few. Martin credits much of this professional versatility to her time as a UM student and the lack of restriction in the mass communication program.

"To me, that's what makes it stand out, and the fact that it's rooted in a liberal arts degree, so we're always pulling knowledge from a lot of different places and that's informing how we choose to create and communicate. So, Montevallo was always the place."

She hopes to employ this same philosophy in the classroom in order to optimize student creativity.

"I want the students to be able to explore wherever their creativity takes them because you may have a student who originally thinks they're more journalistically inclined, but then they may decide later that they want to be a documentarist," Martin said. "I think exposing the students to all the areas and allowing [them] to sort of play in the sand box lets [them] stretch [themselves] creatively and gives [them] a really good portfolio when [they] graduate."

Council approves new historical markers for African American Heritage Trail

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

The Montevallo City Council expanded the city's African American Heritage Trail at their Sept. 11 meeting, approving the addition of two new historical markers at two local churches.

The two markers will be placed at Ward Chapel AME Church, located on West Street, and Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, located on Selma Road.

The Montevallo African American Heritage Trail is a project approved by the city in August 2022 under the Montevallo Historic Preservation Commission. The trail seeks to commemorate sites relevant to Black history and culture in Montevallo through signage and markers.

The council approved the two markers unanimously.

City council members also discussed plans to renovate the historic Mahler House located at Shoal Creek Park.

Currently, there are plans to renovate the house into a welcome center. This would include renovating the interior of the house to include a welcome area, gift shop area, office space and ADA compliant restroom on the first floor. Additionally, there are plans to renovate the second floor into a small apartment for a caretaker for the house and Shoal Creek Park as a whole to live in.

Discussion at the council meeting was centered around accepting a proposal from architect Rob Walker for mechanical and electrical plans for the house, as well as construction oversight services.

City clerk Steve Gilbert outlined Walker's plans for overseeing construction work, saying that Walker plans to pay weekly visits to the site while construction work is underway. He added that Walker also plans to make additional visits to inspect the site every time construction contractors ask to draw from project funds.

The council voted to accept Walker's service offer unanimously.

Also discussed at this meeting was the city's budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The proposed budget plans for nearly $8.3 million in revenue and nearly $7 million in expenditures.

The budget was developed after meeting with department heads to assess their needs and develop individual department budgets, according to Gilbert.

Two noticeable increases in expenditures within this year's budget come from plans to increase city employee salaries and increases in the cost of property insurance. Gilbert said the budget includes a 6% increase in wages for city employees—to account for higher costs of living, according to Mayor Rusty Nix—as well as a 3.5% increase in the cost of city employee insurance. Additionally, the cost of property insurance for city property is set to increase by 20%.

The council did not vote on the budget at this meeting, but will vote on it at their next meeting on Sept. 25.

The council also voted on and approved three new board appointments. Two of these appointments were for the Parks and Recreation Board—appointing Andrea Eckelman, a political science professor at the University of Montevallo, and reappointing Christopher Smith to the board until September 2026. The other appointment placed Kevin Hughes on the Design Review Committee until September 2026 as well.

The council approved these appointments as a slate, with only council member Martha Eisenberg opposing all three.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Sept. 25, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.

SGA Senate meeting discusses beginning of year events

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

The University of Montevallo's Student Government Association held its weekly meeting to discuss upcoming campus events, SGA position applications and Mr. and Mrs. Montevallo applications.

The meeting started at 4:30 with Executive Cabinets giving officer reports.

During officer reports, UPC Coordinator Ivey Siegel announced an upcoming UPC event with a hypnotist. This event took place Sept. 7 at the Center for the Arts.

Siegel also announced Vallo Family Feud, a "Family Feud" style game students will compete in. Students can also answer survey questions which the answers will be pulled from. Vallo Family Feud is set for Sept. 21, but Siegel encouraged the senate to answer the survey beforehand. The survey can be found through the QR code on the UPC Instagram page.

SGA elections will be held in two weeks. Students will be able to vote for Freshman Forum, Transfer Senator, Freshman Senator, or General Assembly positions during these elections.

The senate discussed Mr. and Ms. Montevallo applications that were due September 8. Students must have had 90 credit hours to apply.

The next officer report was from the WOW Weekend committee. SGA will be hosting their monthly WOW Weekend event on Sept. 22 and 23. The WOW Weekend event on Sept 22 will include karaoke. On Sept. 23, SGA will be hosting yard games at Farmer Hall with a DJ and a photobooth.

The meeting ended with announcements that consisted of the previously listed events. The meeting was formally closed at 4:39 p.m.



Graphic by Makayla Montgomery.

Forrester memorial scholarship in the works

By NETHAN CREW.

A new scholarship in memory of Dr. Stefan Forrester, Montevallo's only philosophy professor who passed away in July, is under development. The scholarship, which is being spearheaded by Forrester's partner of 15 years, Dr. Jill Wicknick, will benefit philosophy and humanities students in need of aid.

Shortly before his passing, Wicknick and Forrester discussed an endowed scholarship, with Wicknick stating, "It was Dr. Forrester's idea to establish a scholarship for students of philosophy; he proposed this idea to me a couple of months before he died and we discussed it in some detail so I was aware of his wishes."

An endowed scholarship has a set contribution designated as the corpus that remains untouched forever. The corpus earns interest and the interest is used annually for scholarships.

For this scholarship, the corpus contribution will come from Forrester's estate. The scholarship was established by Wicknick, Elizabeth Forrester—Forrester's mother—and Derek and Leslie Forrester—Forrester's brother and sister-in-law.

The minimum donation for the corpus of an endowed scholarship is $25,000. This amount earns $1,000 in interest annually, thus providing $1,000 annually as scholarship funding. When Wicknick and Forrester's family set up the scholarship, there were matching funds available for the corpus from another UM donor, the Murray estate. These matching funds will double the corpus and, as a result, an additional $1,000 annually will be available as scholarship funding. In total, the corpus will be $50,000 and will provide $2,000 in scholarship funds annually.

The donors who establish the scholarship, in this case, Wicknick and Dr. Forrester's family, also determine the scholarship requirements and eligibility. Wicknick stated that, "We decided that the scholarship will provide $1000 to each of two students each academic year."

Scholarship recipients must be rising juniors or rising seniors with at least a 3.0 GPA. The scholarship is renewable. Therefore, a student who received it as a rising junior would be eligible again to receive it as a rising senior. There is no income requirement for the scholarship.

Students who are studying philosophy will have priority for the scholarship. If there are less than two eligible philosophy students for a given academic year, students who are studying creative writing, instrumental music or art will become eligible. These four areas were selected because they were the disciplines that Forrester loved the most.

Wicknick will administer the scholarship, meaning she will select scholarship recipients using the established criteria. Recipients will be selected from students who apply through UM's scholarship application system, Awardspring, and who meet the eligibility requirements. After Wicknick leaves the university, scholarship recipients will be selected by a scholarship administrator or a committee appointed by the chair of UM's English department.

Wicknick expects that the first two scholarships will be awarded for the 2024-2025 academic year if all funds and paperwork are in place by the required deadline of Sept. 30, 2024.

In addition to the Dr. Stefan B. Forrester Philosophy and Fine Arts Endowed Scholarship, some of Forrester's colleagues in the English department are working to compile many of his poems into a poetry collection, including Dr. Ashley Wurzbacher and Dr. Alex Barringer—who are working to collect as many of his poems as possible. According to Wurzbacher, completing the compilation will likely take time, but the English department will spread the word once they are done.

Cross country to host Falcon Classic and NCAA DII South Regional Championship

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

The University of Montevallo's Cross Country team has a stacked upcoming season. They will be hosting the Falcon Classic and NCAA DII South Regional Championship at home.

UM's Cross Country team will host the Falcon Classic in Montevallo on Sept.15 and the NCAA DII South Regional Championship on Nov. 4.

Junior UM cross country runner Abby Snyder said racing at home is more familiar, as Montevallo's cross country course is the one that the cross country team often practices with.

"You know when to push," Snyder said.

Sarah Turner, a sophomore cross country runner at UM said, "Our coach says 'You should know these hills like the back of your hand.'"

The experience is unlike any other race. "It's also different waking up in your own bed on a race day and then eating your own meals and stuff," Turner said.

Turner said hosting the Falcon Classic makes the race more exciting because of a bigger turnout from fans.

"We know more people show up like other people come and support us at the home meet," Turner said.

Turner and Snyder say that hosting the Falcon Classic is also a great way to prepare for the NCAA DII South Regional Championship.

"For the Falcon Classic a lot of schools from our conference like to come. Especially since we're hosting regionals so then they can feel the course out before they come for the bigger meet," Snyder said.

Race participation for the Falcon Classic is high. More teams run this race to get experience for the NCAA DII South Regional Championship, as this is the same course that will be used for the NCAA DII South Regional Championship.

"It's a big deal to host regionals because so many people in our region are going to be there– a lot of big names and really talented runners. It's cool that we're hosting it. It's a big deal," said Turner.

Last year, the UM Women's Cross Country team placed second at the 2022 Falcon Classic, a 5k race. Their total time was 1:39:57 with an average time of completion of 19:59. They had a score of 52. They were beaten out by the University of Alabama-Huntsville.

At the 2022 Falcon Classic, UM's Men's Cross Country team placed second, also losing to UAH. Their total time for an 8k race was 2:10:05 with an average time of 26:01. Their score was 64.

Montevallo's cross country course was completed in 2011 and has since hosted the Falcon Classic annually. Not only is this course home to collegiate racing, but it also holds races for top high schools in the state.

The course is all-grass with approximately 400 meters of gravel on a path between eight feet and 10 feet wide throughout the trail.

UM Athletics announces second annual fundraiser

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Montevallo Athletics has announced that it will be hosting its second annual Falcon Victory Fundraising Campaign throughout the month of September.

The campaign, which officially kicked off on Sept. 6, aims to raise funds for UM's athletic teams' expenses—such as travel and equipment costs.

Director of Athletics Mark Richard pointed towards connection and progress as underpinning the Falcon Victory Campaign, saying the main goals of the fundraiser, "are to create awareness with our alums, our former student athletes, and let them know that they, you know, they have an opportunity to help out our student athletes as they grow with their programs, their sports, everything we do to make this athletic department move forward."

UM Athletics first held the Falcon Victory Fundraising Campaign in 2022, when it raised $81,000 from 933 donors.

Richard said the fundraiser was the "brainchild" of Director of Advancement Strategic Initiatives Lizbeth Juarez.

"It was her idea and, working very closely with her, we launched it, and it was very, very successful. It was awesome," said Richard about the launch of the campaign last year.

He added, "Of course, once you do it once, you want to do it again."

Falcon Victory Campaign donations can be specified for specific UM teams. This way, each coach and team can decide how the money they raised will be used, according to Richard.

"Each sport has different needs and different ideas and those are what they project or ask the alums for," Richard said.

This also helps cultivate a healthy sense of competition between UM's teams to outraise each other, with the winning team receiving a pizza party and an extra stipend.

"We had teams competing last year, trying to be the number one team as far as the number of donors, number of money," said Richard. "So, it really got contagious there for a while, especially down at the end of the campaign where we're going to have a winner and it was bouncing back and forth, different teams."

During the 2022 fundraiser, UM's softball team raised the most funds with the largest number of donors—raising $13,728 through 236 donations.

Fundraising efforts don't stop with student athletes, however. Richard pointed out that the Falcon Victory Campaign is a department-wide effort. 39 of the 49 Athletics Department employees donated during last year's campaign.

When asked why people should donate to the Falcon Victory Campaign, Richard highlighted the opportunity it provides for donors to connect with UM Athletics.

"You got a chance—whether you were a student athlete here, a donor—but a chance to connect with our athletic department. You have a chance to make a difference in student athletes' lives," he said. "And it's a chance for you to feel good about your money going to a good product, and the product being, you know, student athletes becoming good people, leaders, getting their degrees and being productive."

Those interested in donating to the Falcon Victory Campaign can do so on the campaign's GiveCampus site, which accepts payments by card, Venmo and PayPal. Donations can also be made by mailing a check accompanied by the form available on UM Athletics' website.

The Falcon Victory Campaign runs through Sept. 20.



Apply for paid Alabamian positions on FalconLink! Applications due Sept. 30



Williams waxes on food and literature

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Beginning work at UM at the start of the fall 2023 semester, Dr. Maxine Williams is the latest hire in the UM Departments of English and African American studies.

Williams grew up in Brandon, Miss. She attended Tuskegee University for her undergraduate degree, receiving a degree in English.

"The humanities and liberal arts have always had my heart and English is just where I found my passion," said Williams, who for a time, pursued a double major in English and sociology at Tuskegee. This intersection of literature and its sociopolitical contexts is something that Williams continuously explored in her later studies and research.

Following her time at Tuskegee, Williams attended Purdue University where she earned a master's in American studies with a focus in African American studies and African American protest traditions.

She went on to earn a Ph.D. at Purdue University in American studies, focusing on African American literature, Black feminism and African American foodways.

"My dissertation from those graduate studies really looks at how Black women writers, especially Black women writers post the 1970s, use soul food, or narrate soul food, as a way to assert transgressive sexuality for their Black female characters," said Williams.

Williams' dissertation focused on writers such as Ntozake Shange, Gloria Naylor and Gayl Jones, as well as more contemporary authors, and how they portray African American foodways.

She said the goal of her dissertation was to, "think about the connections between African American foodways and how people of African descent understand themselves and their own subjectivities, right, but also how soul food allows us to practice resistance and practice protest even in domestic spaces like at home where we're having to fight for visibility for our identities and various sexualities."

According to Williams, one of her main inspirations to critically analyze depictions of soul food in literature was found in "Bailey's Café" by Naylor.

Speaking on the inspiration she derived from the story, Williams said, "It dawned on me that all of these authors are using soul food to do the same thing— to make an intimate and personal connection between characters but to also give characters, particularly main characters, space in the cooking and in the eating to be able to think about who they are, think about their own identities, their own subjectivities."

When writing for her master's thesis and dissertation, Williams said, "It was important for me that what I wrote about was something I cared about. Something I cared about, something that I felt like mattered and a subject matter that I felt like would be timely and personal enough for me to want to write about it for an infinite amount of time."

Williams said she has always had a deep connection to and love for soul food and the sense of community it brought her.

"Being a part of the African American community, soul food has been integral to my entire life," she said. "I understood the history of soul food being a part of Black people's protest traditions and being a part of how Black people in the 1960s really fought for cultural and communal visibility."

These personal, cultural and political connections to soul food have had a profound impact on Williams' literary research.

"I was really interested in how these texts were reflecting my life, right, and reflecting just the true reality that food brings people together, but it also helps us understand ourselves on a much more individual level and helps us feel comfortable coming into our own," Williams said.

Williams claimed that, while she has enjoyed reading from a young age, receiving a copy of "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" by Mildred D. Taylor at her school's Scholastic Book Fair cemented her love for and fascination with literature.

"It was transformative. It was one of the first novels that I had ever read by a Black author, particularly a Black woman author, but it was also one of the first novels that kept my attention, kept me coming back for more. I got invested in the characters— I wanted to know what was going on, what was going to happen, and, when the book ended, I was ready for a sequel," said Williams. "That was really the book that let me know that it was ok to keep my interest in literature because there was literature out there for me and literature out there that I could enjoy reading and as I started to think about becoming a professor that there was literature out there that I could expose my students to, right, so that none of my students felt alienated by what we were reading and that all of my students could feel like we were reading something that at one point or another they could connect to."

While looking for a teaching position, Williams was interested in finding a job that would allow her to teach English and literature while also remaining invested in the field of African American studies.

"When I was on the job market, I was very happy to see that the University of Montevallo was looking for someone in the English and World Languages Department who had specialties in African American literature and also had specialties in African American studies," Williams said.

Prior to being hired at UM, Williams taught at Purdue in the African American studies and American studies programs.

Adjusting to teaching at UM has been easy according to Williams. She said that she admires the schools openminded and inviting learning environment.

"I got here and immediately felt comfortable, right. I already felt like I had a place here. My coworkers have been great in helping me acclimate into the environment," Williams said. "I have not felt uncomfortable asking a question and haven't felt like a question I asked would not be answered."

Williams said she has also enjoyed the smaller class sizes at UM which allow her to teach and connect with her students on a more intimate level.

"The sense of community here is clear, you know. At Purdue sometimes you can kind of feel like you are out there on an island, right? All by yourself, and there you may have to look hard for sources of support," Williams said, "but the lines of support here and the sources of support and community here to me are so very clear and are useful and working."

Williams said that at UM she would like to focus on being an active professor and member of the university's community.

Williams said she looks forward to, "being a part of that community that understands the importance of the liberal arts and understands the importance of making sure that we know how to look at things and understand things from a more humanistic perspective because that allows us to be more socially conscious and socially aware."

She is also looking forward to offering a wide variety of courses in the African American studies minor. Williams hopes to further develop the minor as a course of study that students understand the importance of and are invested in pursuing.

During the fall 2023 semester, Williams is teaching three courses: Introduction to African American studies, English Composition I and African American Literature.

During the semester African American Literature will be focusing on the intersection of literature and African American food clearly combining two of Williams' major academic interests.

New semester has you stressed out? Just breathe.

By LAURA MCCALLION.

Whether you are a first-year student in your first semester or a sixth-year student in your last semester, stress management is a skill every student can acquire to navigate the new semester. Dr. Catherine Walsh, a UM art history professor, offers a solution to managing feelings of overwhelming stress through her breathwork sessions hosted in the Old Gym Dance Studio.

On Tuesdays from 4:30-5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 12-12:30 p.m., any student is welcome to take half an hour for themselves and learn to practice healthy breathing. The content of these sessions depends on which one that students choose to attend.

Participants for the Tuesday afternoon sessions are provided an opportunity to unwind and relax for the evening after a long day, practicing deep breathing and clearing their mind from the day's stress. Those that attend the midday sessions on Wednesdays are given a moment to reset for afternoon classes after potentially stressful morning classes.

In these sessions, students learn and practice correct nasal and diaphragmatic breathing, as well as good posture for healthy breathing. Walsh guides the session through various breathwork protocols, each aimed to help the students learn how to control their breathing. The students are then empowered to take these skills and apply them throughout the day. These sessions are designed with the intention to help students become calm, centered and focused.

Walsh is a certified breathing coach and her teaching practice focuses on breathwork as a way to manage stress, mitigate anxiety and generate peace and balance.

When asked about how she chose to follow this path, Dr. Walsh commented, "I found breathwork during an incredibly stressful time in my life during which I was experiencing debilitating panic attacks. Breathwork helped me prevent (short-term) and effectively eliminate (long-term) the panic attacks."

Her personal experience with breathwork led her to not only want to become a coach, but to also share her knowledge with students and colleagues on campus who she believed could benefit from breathwork in the same way that she has.

Walsh points out in these sessions that your breathing habits not only affect your ability to manage stress, but they also affect cognition, digestion, metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure and immune response. Breathing also determines sleep quality and drives athletic performance.

Having poor breathing posture and practices can lead to not only poorer stress management, but can also can negatively affect each aspect of wellness listed above. However, through these sessions, Walsh aims to provide students with the tools to improve breathing habits to support well-being.

Astronomy Club: Stars, sky and spiders

By MADELINE BURBANK.

As student organizations on campus kick off a new year, Montevallo's Astronomy Club is excited to be back to observing the skies in a recently renovated observatory.

The Astronomy Club meets bi-weekly— usually at the James Wylie Shepherd Observatory, though it will meet at The Tower instead in the event of a weather disruption.

According to the Astronomy Club president, Samantha Cost, meetings involve utilizing the telescope and dome of the observatory. These viewings are open to, not only the university students and faculty, but also the general public.

When meetings are disrupted by weather, whether from clouds or a storm, the meeting will instead consist of reviewing and developing upcoming plans for the Astronomy Club as well as sharing discussion of their common interest in astronomy.

The club prides itself on having one of the few Americans with Disabilities Act compliant observatories in the nation. The observatory has sidewalks and ramps leading towards it. Previously the parking lot was not accessible, which led to a project to renovate it over the summer.

Recently, the sidewalk to the observatory has been extended to the parking lot and a concrete pad has been built to allow for unloading vans — enabling full wheelchair accessibility to the observatory.

Cost said that the observatory was less than 15 years old, having been finished in 2009.

"It's kind of new so astronomy club itself is not very old either," she said.

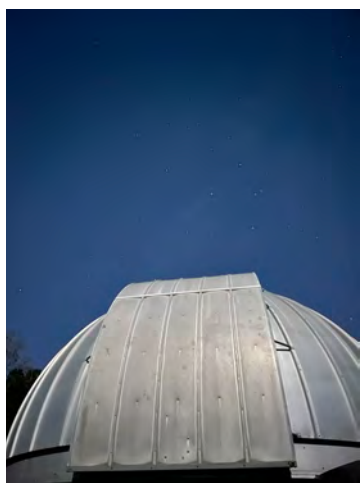
However, the observatory is surrounded by woods and is not used during the summer, which sometimes leads to animal infestations. Before the club started meetings this year, faculty advisor Jessica Thomason discovered a black widow spider infestation in the observatory.

A pest control service has since "come out and handled it so there are no more," Cost said.

So far this semester, the club's two meetings have been held at The Tower, the latter because of a storm. According to Cost, the fall semester is usually better for viewings, though this is often later on because some summer weather remains through early September. The spring semester is more susceptible to inconsistent weather patterns, which makes it more difficult to have consistent viewings.

An upcoming meeting on Sept. 20 is still planned to be held at the observatory, weather permitting. It will involve going out to the telescope, looking over possible T-shirt designs, discussing potential club field trips and familiarizing new members with the telescope.

For the first year in club history, field trips are planned as a potential club activity for the semester. Cost said one potential trip would be to visit the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville.



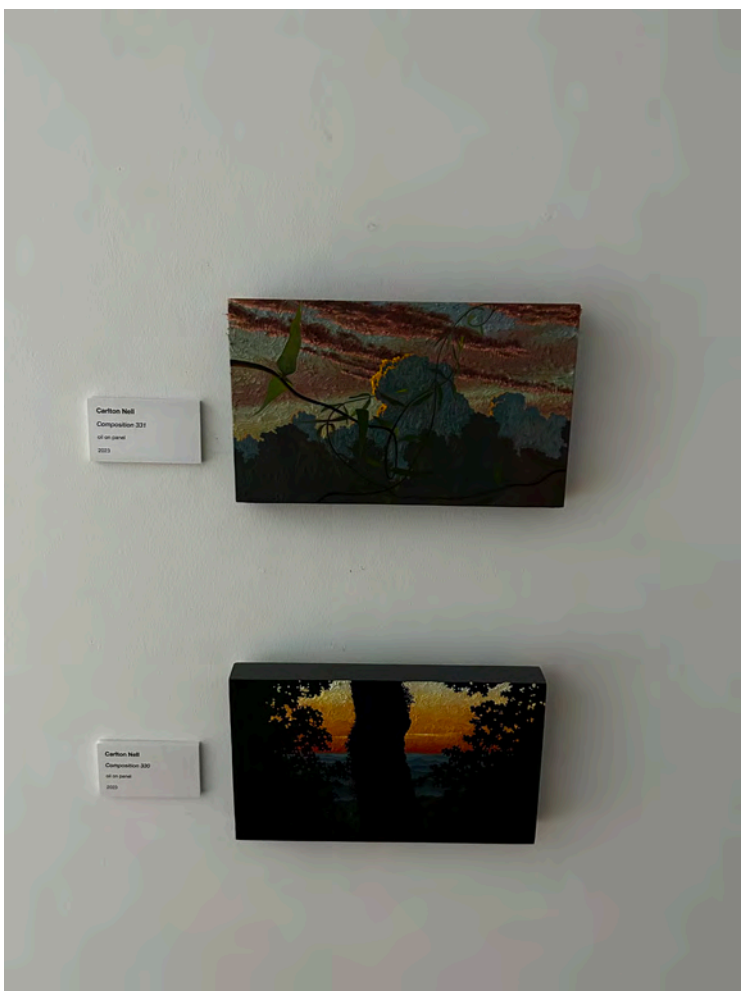


James Wylie Shepherd Observatory. Photos by Cole Swain.

Carlton Nell show hosted in Poole Gallery



Artist Carlton Nell speaks on his oil paintings at the opening of his gallery "Recent Compositions in Silver and Paint." The gallery, housed in the Poole Gallery, opened Sept. 7 and runs until Oct. 12. Photo by Kendall Murray.



Two of Nell's paintings displayed in the gallery. Nell's paintings are numbered rahter than titled in order to emmulate a tone poem. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.



"In looking at that work, I think about the materiality—or looking at materiality, the outside world—and how this work then somehow interacts with the immaterial thoughts," said Nell about his art. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

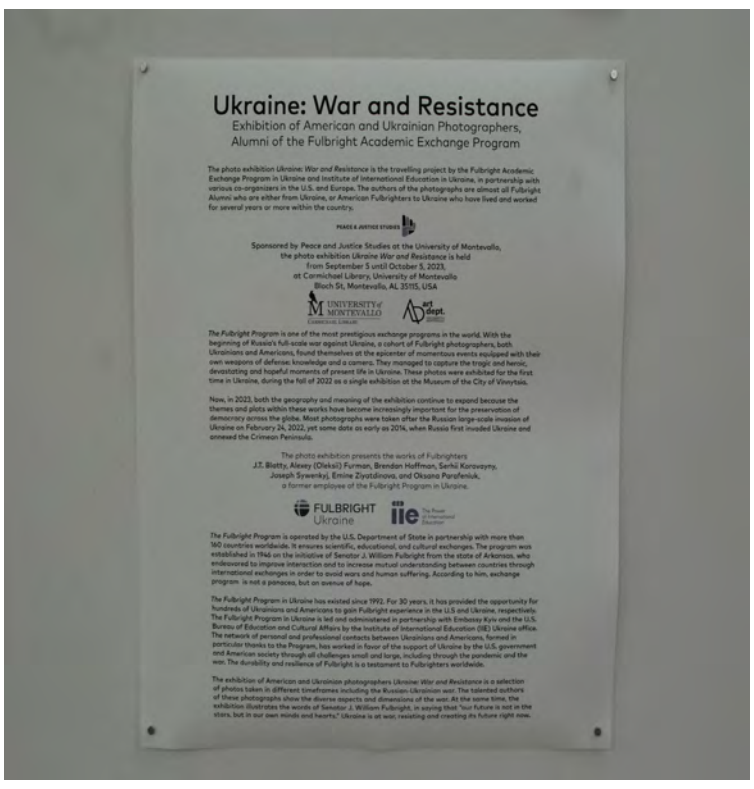


Nell draws inspiration from the natural world for his artwork. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

'Ukraine War and Resistance' gallery photos



Photo taken by Korovayny depicting the aftermath of Russian rocket attacks. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.



Entrance to the "Ukraine: War and Resistance" exhibit housed in Carmichael Library now through Oct. 15. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.



Photo taken by Hoffman showing volunteers receiving weapons. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

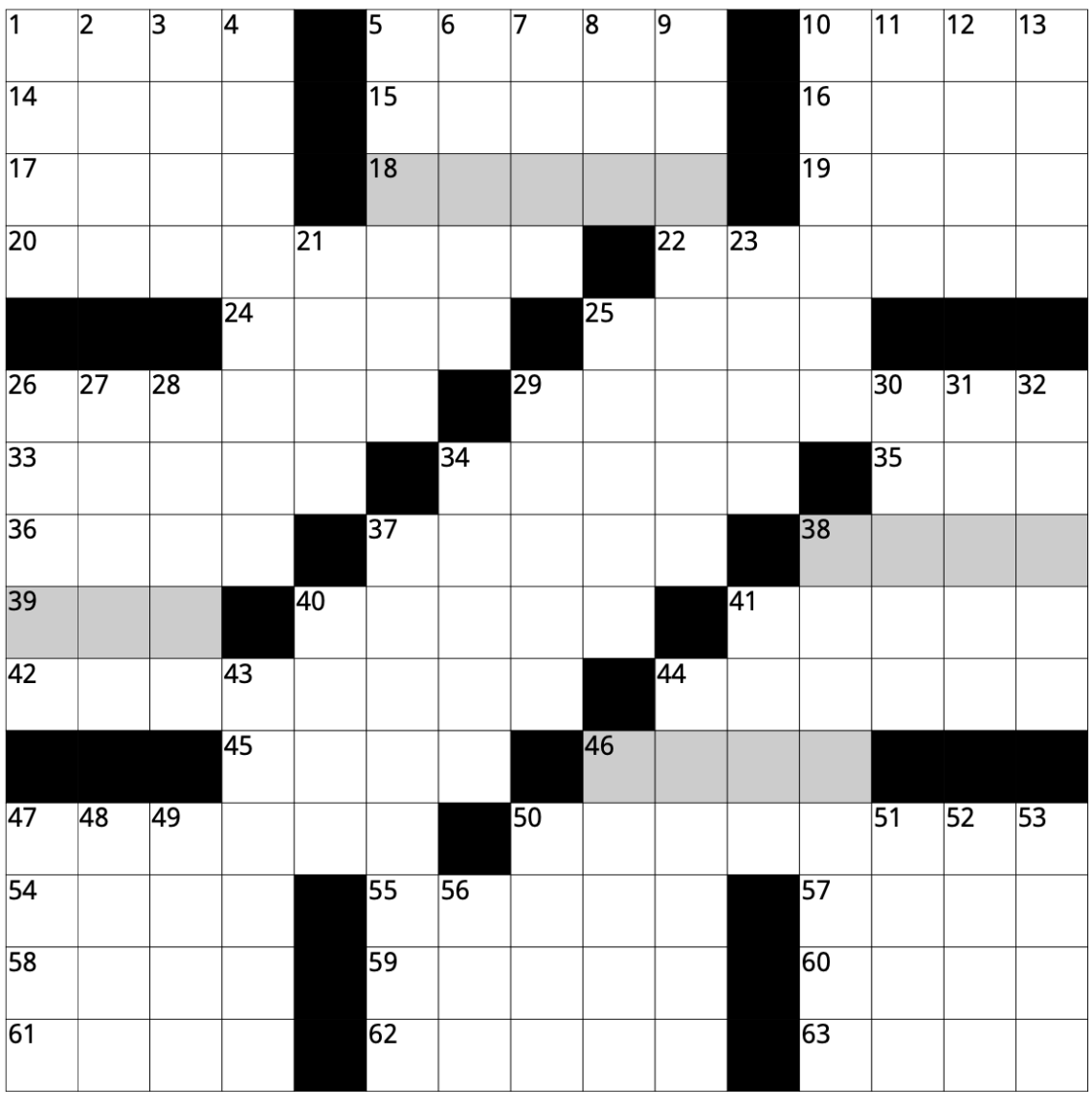
Montevallo's peace and justice studies program has sponsored a photography exhibit showing the works of Ukrainian and American photographers who have been eyewitnesses to the war in Ukraine. Read more about this exhibit in our front page story.



Photo taken by Parafeniuk showing sandbag protections against explosives. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Crossword: The 21st night

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. What you're likely to do when you have food poisoning
5. Hung onto
10. March Madness org.
14. Place
15. Classic detergent brand
16. TV type
17. Word of mouth
18. Part of "September" band (1/4)
19. Intro to legal
20. Party poppers
22. Earbud that has a tendency for getting lost
24. Regulation
25. Voice below soprano
26. Esteem
29. Return the favor
33. Warty creatures
34. Burdened
35. __ tai
36. Yawn causer
37. Canvas bags
38. Part of "September" band (2/4)
39. Part of "September" band (3/4)
40. They have six faces
41. Cat family member
42. Fitted
44. Joan of Arc's offense
45. Raggedy dolls
46. Part of "September" band (4/4)
47. Cut money from
50. Keanu Reeves role
54. Cake decorator
55. Verdi work
57. Gumbo ingredient
58. Pigeon's house
59. Attended
60. Tilt
61. Israeli airline
62. Subjects that can be proper
63. Stardom

Down:

1. Shapeless mass
2. ___ _ grievance
3. Authentic
4. Free college
5. Big Easy cuisine
6. "Big Little Lies" author Moriarty
7. Nigerian paramilitary group, abbr.
8. Test used to measure fetal heartbeat, abbr.
9. Split the cost
10. Not a big deal, casually
11. Thunder sound
12. Dynamic start
13. What you might resemble when you get really into telling corny jokes and listening to Eagles
21. Belonging to us
23. Florida to California road
25. Senate staffers
26. Swinging now
27. Stroller brand
28. _____ Gras
29. Like some communities
30. How far one may miss by
31. Major dog constellation
32. Type of inflatable pool
34. Sites for studs
37. Refuse
38. Full moon creature
40. Mass. Neighbor
41. Plant with fronds
43. 2022 Mitski album "_____ Hell"
44. Drumkit part
46. "I won't take no ___ __ answer"
47. Vegas cubes
48. Environmental sci.
49. Greek cheese
50. Mass savior
51. Furniture giant
52. Study last minute
53. "Citizen ____"
56. Kung ___ chicken

Scan for answers!



By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor of content.

Aries:
Neglect skin care this month, Aries. Stop caring what others think about you and don't be a marketable group.

Taurus:
You have the wild heart of a stallion, Taurus. Think about a career in jockeying. Let your inner horse girl shine.

Gemini:
Try a new coffee order, Gemini. You need a change, but not a dramatic one. Mix one small thing up.

Cancer:
Look behind you, Cancer. By that I mean look into your past. Do deep introspection and reflection. Talk to someone you've left behind.

Leo:
You should visit Eastern Europe in the near future, Leo. I hear Lithuania is nice in the fall.

Virgo:
You're a warrior, Virgo. Get into pillaging mode and don't let anything stop you from getting what you want.

Libra:
Cultivate a lack of self-awareness, Libra. Get out of your head and live in the moment. Sometimes ignorance is bliss.

Scorpio:
Take your vitamins, Scorpio. Especially Vitamin C. I see a common cold in your future if you're not careful.

Sagittarius:
Reconnect with your middle school bestie, Sagittarius. No guarantees that you will still be friends, but think of it as an intel collecting mission.

Capricorn:
Start a nu metal band, Capricorn. Or any band, but just make sure that you're channeling your inner Sum 41.

Aquarius:
Get certified, Aquarius. Scuba certified, forklift certified, life guard certified. It doesn't matter, just get certified.

Pisces:
Go sleep soon, Pisces. I mean it. Make sure you're taking care of yourself even when it's hard.

Freshman take on Tinglewood

By CARTER BIBB.



Carved tree at Orr Park. Photo by Carter Bibb.

Swerving around pedestrians, my bike swam through the crowd of people at Orr Park. Knowing relatively little about Tinglewood Festival, I admit to being at least somewhat surprised by the number of people that were walking towards the main entrance of the park. The Tinglewood Festival was focused on woodcarving, a subject which I would never have suspected to be popular. Alas, I never should have doubted it for a second. The first thing you will notice are the woodcarvings in Orr Park itself. Scattered around the park are the famous tree carvings, dead trees whose trunks have been carved into. All of which were created by Tim Tingle, the namesake of the festival. From faces of old men to a beetle, now half-weathered away by the elements, you can find a menagerie of figures. Fortunately—and I must admit that I happened upon their vendor almost entirely by coincidence—I had a chance to talk to Tim Tingle's son.

"[Tim Tingle] started these carvings in 1993 and it's been thirty years. Someone on the art council here had a proposal, so it wasn't necessarily his idea," said Joseph Tingle.

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The Alabamian

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Director of 'Pill Hill' gives insights into production

By CARTER BIBB.

The University of Montevallo Theatre Department's production of "Pill Hill," is premiering Oct. 5 and will run until Oct. 8 at UM's Center for the Arts. The play is directed by theatre Professor Chalethia Williams. "Pill Hill" stars Brandon Bird, Tyler Rice, Nick Johnson, Paul Hall, Jordan Hall and Romeo Grant.

"Pill Hill," written by Sam Kelley and first premiered in 1993, follows the lives of seven Black steel mill workers as they follow their own individual hopes and dreams. It is divided into three acts corresponding to the three time periods that the play focuses on. The first act is set in 1973, the second act is set in 1978 and the final act is set in 1983.

The play is minimalistic, with only seven main characters appearing on stage and set entirely within a bar located in the eponymous Pill Hill—a wealthy majority white neighborhood, deriving its name from number of upper-class doctors that live there.

According to Williams, she is highly appreciative of the ways that her actors have acclimated to the setting. While no one in the cast was alive during the time period the play is set in, the cast and crew have worked to establish that the history explored in the play is still affecting them in the modern day.

Elaborating on the historical aspect of the story, Williams said, "The beginning of it, in '73, has a lot of things about the civil rights movement. It happened just before that."

Her hope is that the cast and crew, through working with each other and connecting with the themes of the play, gain a new perspective on their own history as well.

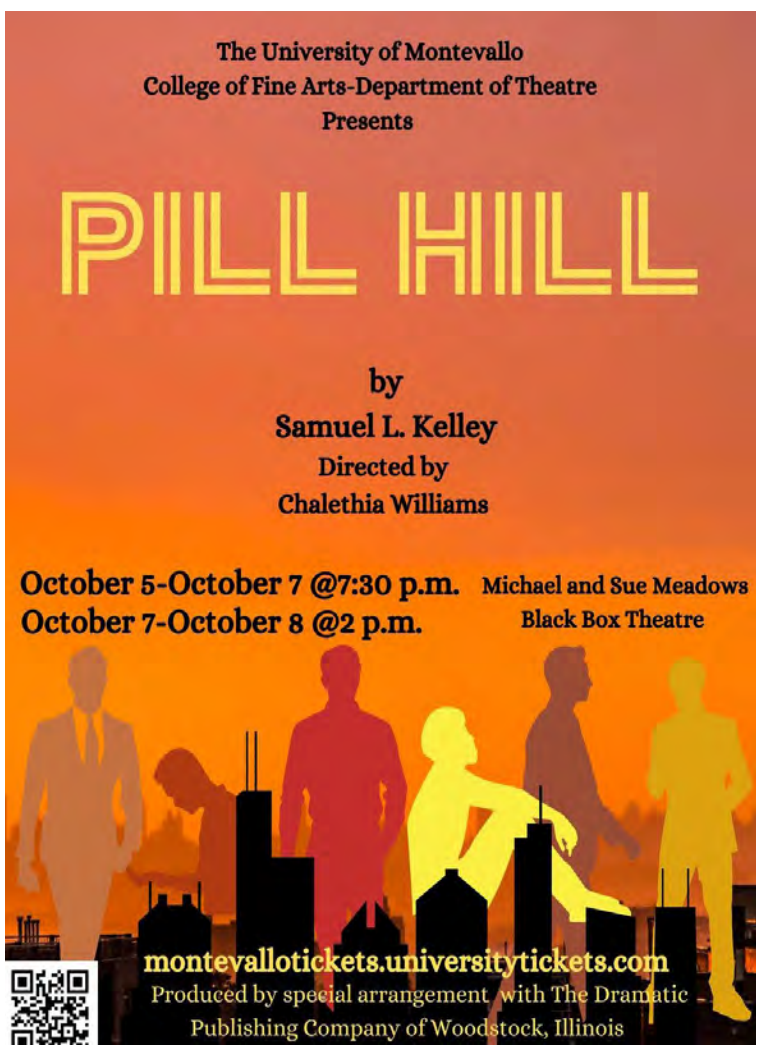
As with all theatre productions, this one also brought a diverse group of people with it, many of whom had not known one another until they met during rehearsals.

"Initially, it's a new time for everyone. We're getting together, we don't know each other, we've never worked with each other before," Williams said.

Williams also had to acclimate herself to the play. Despite having seen it once before in the 90s, there were many things she found she had forgotten about the plot and characters, offering a new perspective on a story which she had not thought about for over 30 years.

Williams, when asked why people should come see the play, said, "The takeaway that I wanted from audiences as well as the cast is to understand better how we are all the same […] We all suffer the same."

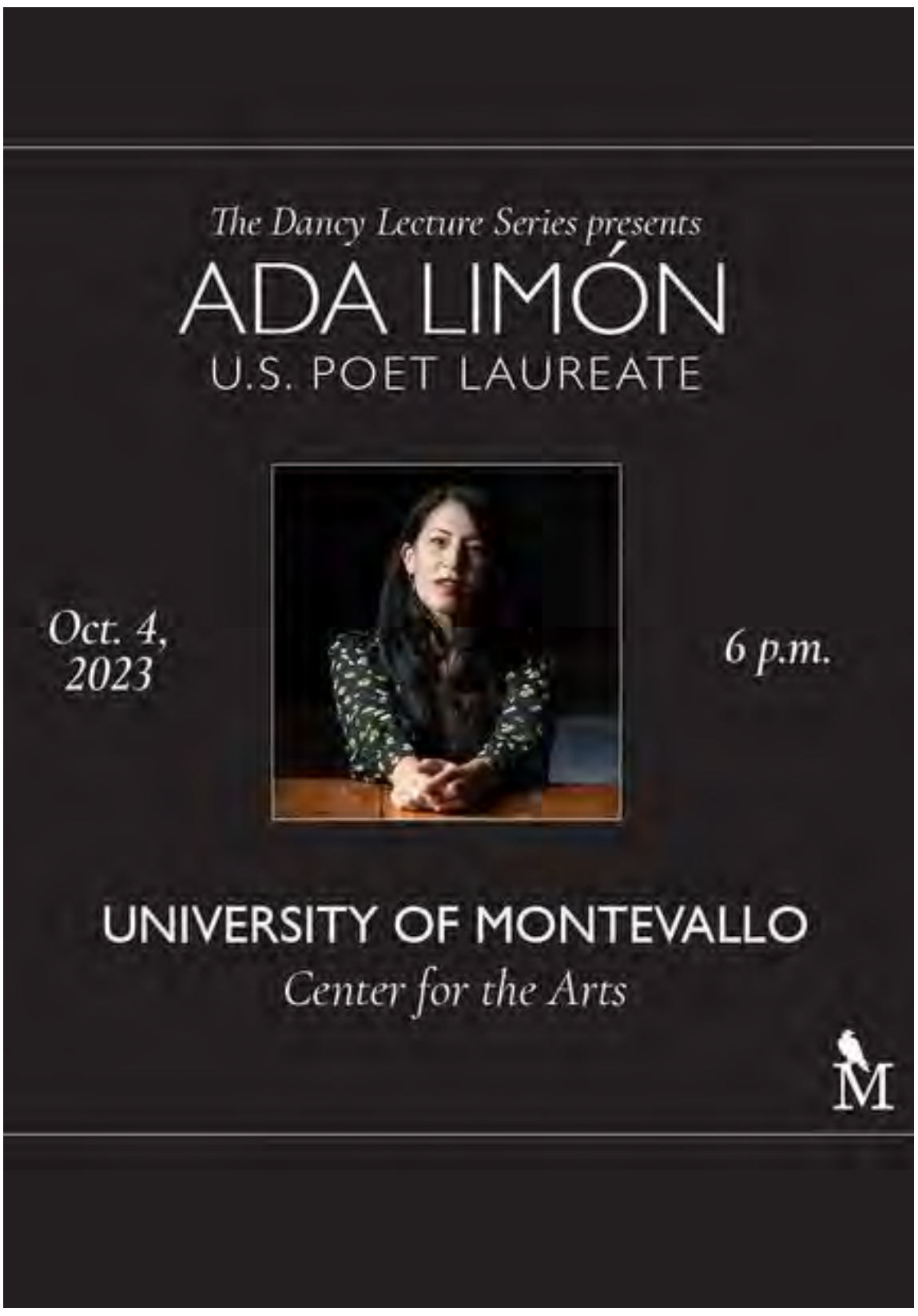
"Pill Hill" will premiere on Oct. 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Michael and Sue Meadows Black Box Theatre. Additional showings will occur on Oct. 6 at 7 p.m, Oct. 7 at 2 p.m and 7:30 p.m and Oct. 8 at 2:00pm. Tickets can be bought at montevallotickets.universitytickets.com.



Promotional material for "Pill Hill." Poster by Montevallo Theatre department.

United States Poet Laureate Ada Limón to visit UM

By SKYE ANDERSON.



Dancy Lecture Series poster. Poster by UM's English Department.

On Oct. 4, the University of Montevallo will host United States Poet Laureate Ada Limón. Limón will be giving a lecture at the Center for the Arts at 6 p.m. as part of the university's Dancy Lecture Series.

Limón, who has published six poetry books, is known for her accessible yet evocative writing style, in which she often employs a conversational, yet earnest, tone while focusing on themes of nature, familial values, strength and perseverance. For this, her work has received high acclaim and accolades, including the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry awarded to her 2018 book "The Carrying."

Limón grew up in Sonoma, Cal., to a family of artists and teachers. In her youth, she was heavily inspired by her mother, Stacia Brady, a painter whose works Limón later used as book covers. Of Mexican-American descent, Limón takes great pride in her heritage; she has said that Sonoma is where she feels most at home. Limón currently lives in Lexington, Ky., but continues to split her time between there and Sonoma.

Though she fell in love with poetry in high school, Limón initially spent a great deal of her academic career studying theatre. In 1998, she graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts degree in drama before going on to earn her Master of Fine Arts degree in poetry at New York University in 2001.

After finishing school, Limón stayed in New York, where she worked in marketing at Condé Nast—the media company that owns publications such as "Vogue," "The New Yorker," "GQ," "Vanity Fair" and "Wired"—while simultaneously working on her poetry. Within this time, she published her first three poetry collections: 2005's "This Big Fake World: A Story in Verse," 2006's "Lucky Wreck" and 2010's "Sharks in the Rivers."

Limón's 2010 loss of her stepmother to colon cancer caused her to reassess her career; wanting to make the most of her time, she quit her marketing job and decided to pursue writing full-time.

"When things feel so heavy, this is the long game. Right?" Limón told "Vanity Fair" in 2022. "Poetry is a long game. Life is a long game. Love is a long game. It's bigger than me. The planet is a long game and, in that moment of recognition, urgency dissolves a little bit."

Limón was named the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States by Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden in July 2022, making her the first Latina to ever hold the title. In April 2023, her term was renewed for two more years.

During her time as poet laureate, Limón has continued to share writings—her new poem, "The Endlessness," was published in the Sept. 11 edition of "The New Yorker." She has also spent her terms giving lectures and readings at universities across the nation.

In addition to hosting Limón, the Dancy Lecture Committee has organized many other guest speaker events at Montevallo. The series has hosted several poets, authors and playwrights in previous years.

During her time at UM, Limón will speak with creative writing students and students in Montevallo's M.A.D.E. program prior to her lecture. Following the Dancy Lecture, Limón will have a book signing.

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Letter from the editor: I love my hairy legs

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

I'm not exaggerating or speaking in hyperbole when I say that I love my hairy legs. I really and truly do.

In January 2019, the middle of my junior year of high school, I decided to stop shaving. At first, I had only intended to stop for the month. I figured I had, more or less, been shaving at least once a week for the past five years of my life, and that it could be interesting to see what it would be like to not do that.

Then, January ended and I started saying I would start shaving once it got warm, since I would be wearing shorts again. If no one could see my leg hair, then was it really there? If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there, does it really make a sound?

Spring came and went, and a razor was still yet to touch my body. Summer was in full-swing, shorts were, once again, in the wardrobe rotation, and my hairy legs were on full-display for everyone to see.

Fast-forward to almost five years later, and I can count the number of times that I've shaved since then on a single hand. It's been nearly three years since I've shaved at all.

Now, there's three main reactions I can see you, reader, having to this letter thus far. Reaction option one: you've read this letter so far and your only reaction has been, "So what? Who cares what you do with your body?" Honestly, this is one of the preferred reactions. You can probably stop reading this letter here and go on about the rest of your day.

Reaction option two: you've read this letter so far and your main reaction has been, "Gross! Body hair on a woman? That's so unhygienic!" This is not the preferred reaction, and I encourage you to read on and hear me out.

Reaction option three: you've read this letter so far and your main reaction has either been, "Oh cool, I love my hairy legs too!" or, "I can love my hairy legs? This was an option?" In both cases, I also encourage you to read on as well. This is my love letter to my hairy legs, and I think it might resonate with you, too.

First and foremost, to those that believe that women's body hair is inherently unhygienic: let's interrogate that thought further.

Body hair grows naturally. There is no difference between the body hair that grows on women's bodies and the body hair that grows on men's bodies. So why is it that body hair is only seen as unhygienic or unseemly when it's growing on a woman's body?

The truth is, women's body hair isn't inherently unhygienic. Years of marketing tactics have just made you believe that it is. Shaving body hair wasn't even a common practice for women until the 1920s, when advertisers decided to start marketing razors to women who were now wearing more revealing clothing than in decades past. My decision to not shave may be an aesthetic choice I make when it comes to my personal upkeeping, but it is certainly not a matter of personal hygiene—it's literally just hair that grows on my body.

One of the main reasons I think I love my hairy legs is because not shaving feels like a small act of autonomy in a culture that seeks to strip as much autonomy away from women as possible. In particular, not shaving my legs feels like an act of defiance against the toxic beauty industry that creates and mass markets insecurity to women in order to turn a profit.

As I pointed out earlier, there is no difference between men's and women's body hair. Yet this idea that women shouldn't have body hair has become so culturally engrained in our minds that so many women are left buying hair removal products, such as razors and wax, from before they're even teenagers until the day they die in order to achieve that standard. Thinking about that makes me feel dizzy—the fact that something so arbitrary can have such a death grip on so many people's minds. It makes me want to run away from society forever and live in a cave.

I wanted out of this beauty-poisoned rat race of seeing who can give the most money to corporations to be the most beautiful and, therefore, correct for just a fleeting second. Who is shaving serving? Not me, that's for sure. I didn't even care that much about having smooth legs for approximately two days before stubble started growing back in.

So, yes, I love my hairy legs. I love how soft my legs feel when I run my hands over them. I love wearing shorts and feeling the breeze blow through my leg hair and seeing how golden my hair looks when the sun hits it just right. Most importantly, I love the fact that my hairy legs affirm the fact that I'm not a commodity, I'm a person.

I'm sure there are many people who will always view my body hair as gross or unkempt, plenty of people who I will never be able to convince of the fact that women are expected to shave is a misogynistic double standard. Ultimately, I've made my peace with this fact. At the end of the day, I'm happy with letting my body exist as it is—others' reactions to my decision to embrace that tells me what I need to know about them.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

I'm tired of hearing what's going on, and you can be too

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

I'm tired of hearing what's going on, and hearing what's going on makes me tired. This may sound pretentious, or even lazy, but let me explain.

I am a perpetually stressed person, and the amount of coffee I consume on a daily basis doesn't help. Adjacent to these factors, I consume the news like jelly beans, spend too much time on Instagram and Twitter—sorry, but I refuse to call it X—watch too many depressing documentaries and cannot turn away from an interesting story, even if said story will stress me out or make me sad.

Curiosity is what fuels my stress levels, which is depressing. We are taught to be curious, to ask questions, to investigate further—but, at what point do we, or I, sacrifice curiosity for peace? Is that even a possibility with the standards of being a present human being, let alone the standards of being a college student?

For instance, I am a social science major with a political science concentration, so I take a lot of political science classes. If I don't consume the news like jelly beans, it's difficult to be present in conversations that occur in all of these classes—in this case, the stress levels of curiosity are necessary for me to succeed. All of the terrifying statistics on climate change, staying up to date on the ongoing tragedies in Ukraine, the flooding in Libya that has killed more than 3,000 people, Tommy Tuberville being a senator. I mean, War Eagle, but come on.

All of these topics stress me out, but I feel that it is necessary to stay up to date despite the raging stress levels that come from them. Even though I continue to learn, continue to be curious, continue to be present in class, I am tired of hearing what's going on.

On Sept. 11, in a political science class, we discussed our generation's opinions and perspectives of that day in 2001. Many of us agreed that early 2000s babies have no personal connection to the Twin Towers being hit, unless of course you unfortunately knew someone who was affected. But, none of us did. Many of us also agreed that we were desensitized from that tragic day and only remember hearing about it in elementary school for the first time, filling out worksheets about our feelings toward it. But, despite our generation being defined by 9/11, both politically and culturally, there seems to be little attachment.

Gen Zers have seen a great deal of tragedy within our short lifetimes. Other than 9/11, we have been defined by the housing crash and recession of 2008, unbelievable amounts of gun violence—the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting that killed 20 children and six adults, specifically—the clearest documentation of the ongoing police brutality epidemic, increasingly destructive natural disasters emphasized by climate change and of course, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just re-reading that paragraph makes me nauseous; no wonder 9/11 doesn't seem to make an impact on us. Generation Z has witnessed and been defined by weird tragedies, and when I read about a 4th grader who has been murdered by an automatic weapon while eating their school lunch, I am terrified, but not surprised.

At this point, it's expected and seems as though nothing is going to change. The National Rifle Association will continue to make their bank and the 2nd amendment will continue to be defended up to the ownership of grenade launchers.

Without hope and no promising improvement of ongoing issues in the United States and the rest of the world, it becomes hard to care—it becomes hard to hear about what's going on.

There is an internet term for this: black pilled. It's a bit of an anarchist term, and depending on where you stand on the political scale, it can have different definitions. But, in the most general of senses, black pilled defines a person that believes error has infiltrated operative systems in government too deeply, that society is too far gone, that humans have done too much environmental damage, that it's okay to be tired of hearing what's going on because you think it's not going to get better.

I am black pilled. Bad news depresses me, which gives me some good empathy credit, but it also wears me out considering that I hear and read about the same things every single day with little change in sight. War crimes, mass shootings, famine, environmental disasters, political ridiculousness, animal abuse, human trafficking, religious persecution, affluent college kids getting away with sexual assault—none of it surprises me.

I'm sorry if you're depressed reading this, but, welcome to my brain! Sometimes it's warm and cozy, but, more often than not, social media consumption along with being surrounded by the intelligent students and professors of UM constantly informs me of what's going on in the world, and it's hard to imagine that—with Earth's carrying capacity ever closing in—stability is forthcoming.

Knowing the happenings of the world is exhausting; sometimes I just want to throw my phone into University Lake and not hear anymore news, but, for things to get better, I still ultimately feel doing that is negligent.

For things to get better, we must continue to devour information and fight the good fight. But, I am here to give you my opinion that it is okay and perfectly normal to be tired of hearing what's going on. I know I am. You can still make a difference in the world, even though you may be tired of hearing about it.

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“A Just Reckoning: Finding Deeper, Truer King House Narratives:” a seminar unearthing the history behind King House

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

The history of The University of Montevallo goes much deeper than what you might think on the surface. It plays a role in the history of central Alabama, the effects of which we are still seeing today.

On Sept. 14, Dr. Melanie Morrison, a descendant of Edmund King’s daughter, Elizabeth King, held a seminar in Carmichael Library where she shared her experiences while researching the suppressed stories of racism, prejudice and abuse surrounding King House.

The seminar “A Just Reckoning: Finding Deeper, Truer King House Narratives” and Morrison were hosted by the Montevallo branch of the American Association of University Women and the UM Peace and Justice Studies Program.

Morrison is an author, speaker and anti-racism educator. With over 30 years of experience in training and educating groups to learn more about the narratives in history, she enlightened her audience with the truth behind the King family.

Throughout the seminar, Morrison referenced many literary works on the topic of racism in the South and the history of central Alabama. One of which being “The Lives and Time of Kingswood in Alabama 1817-1890,” by Golda Johnson, the wife of former university president, Nelson Johnson. This book tells the story of the King family but neglects to mention the role slavery held in their history. This plays a role in why Morrison is working to bring light to the true narrative of King House.

Edmund King was a wealthy landowner, merchant and entrepreneur, who, during the 19th century owned a large amount of land across central Alabama. His primary residence was at King House in Montevallo. King later donated the land to the university when it was named The Alabama Girls Industrial School in 1896.

Morrison centered her seminar around three different points. The first being how the history of the King family is connected to some of the bigger events in American history that we still study today. The land surrounding Montevallo was built by slaves and the indigenous people who lived here before. The indigenous people who once populated this area were forced to leave their homes due to the Indian Removal Act, signed by president Andrew Jackson in 1830.

The next point is one that tends to be overlooked— the role that white women played in enslavement. Although women were not allowed to own any property at the time, Elizabeth King, daughter of Edmund King, was an exception to this rule. She owned several slaves, either bought with her own fortune or left to her by her father. Despite most women not being able to own slaves, they were still the ones in the homes commanding and abusing them.

“The role that women played in enslavement must be investigated,” said Morrison.

The last point of the seminar was the toll that racism and abuse took on the bodies, minds and spirits of those enslaved. Not only was this trauma caused directly by the slave owners because of the living conditions and abuse, but also because many of the slaves were separated from their loved ones and could not flee due to the harsh conditions and fear of being caught.



Dr. Melanie Morrison at the lecture. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

Morrison told the story of an enslaved woman named Sookie who saved up all of her earnings to strike a deal to keep her family together. She paid $1,600 to keep her and her two daughters, Margaret and Ann, together.

The court document written on Sookie’s behalf, and other documents from this dark period in our history can be found at the Shelby County Museum located in Columbiana, where they are working to digitize their records so that families can track their relatives and uncover more of their heritage stories.

Through education, Morrison says she is able to “do a deep work of truth telling and healing so that we might break silences and rebuild the foundations of our community.”

Morrison has a Master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School and a Ph.D. in theology from University of Groningen in The Netherlands.

For more information about Morrison and her works, you can visit her website at melaniemorrison.net.

Rent tools and technology for success with the Library of Things

By KENDALL MURRAY.

The University of Montevallo’s Carmichael Library has started an equipment service, called the Library of Things, where students can check out electronics and tools such as cameras, iPads, screwdrivers and more.

The Library of Things was started by Nicole Rich who said, “It occurred to us that it would be cool to have some tools and items that might be useful to students and the community.”

According to Rich, she drew inspiration for the library from her grandmother, who raised her to be independent. The Library of Things encourages students to learn new skills by allowing them to borrow items that they may only need once and do not have the resources to purchase.

The Library of Things provides students with a variety of tools and electronics for checkout such as laptops, tablets and power banks. The library also offers a small collection of do it yourself manuals and how-to books to promote sustainability and equity by allowing students to borrow items instead of buying them.

The Green Fund is a grant program, which is a grant run by the Sustainability Committee, where students, faculty and staff can apply for grants to fund sustainability projects across campus. The grant has funded several sustainability projects in the past, such as recycling bins, water fountains and bike racks.

Rich explained the Green Fund has helped make the Library of Things possible, saying, “We’ve purchased all the tools that we can afford to purchase now through the Green Grant. Maybe we’ll be able to find some more funds in the future.”

Students can apply for grants from the Green Fund until Oct. 10.

Rich says she is hopeful that this new service will benefit students and the community by providing them with the resources they need to succeed.

SGA inducts three new senators, discusses campus events

By NETHAN CREW.

Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

SGA Senate met on Sept. 13 to induct three new senators and discuss upcoming events. Opening the meeting, UPC coordinator Ivey Siegel talked about specifics on that night’s UPC event, Stuff A Friend, where students enjoyed Frios popsicles and made stuffed animals.

During the meeting, SGA inducted junior Senator Danyelle Dukes, Arts and Science Senator sophomore Lee Harris and International Senator freshman Victoria Corcimaru as new senators.

SGA President Colton Rodano spoke on a collaboration between UM and the University of Alabama. According to Rodano, the University of Alabama’s Blackburn Institute has a leadership program that they will be hosting on Oct 28. Representatives from the Blackburn Institute are going to be coming to Montevallo to mingle with student leaders.

He also mentioned that Executive Cabinet will be at the event but anyone from SGA Senate is invited if they contact Rodano to RSVP.

Next, committee reports were made. The Student Rights and Interests Committee is mainly focusing on accessibility around campus, especially near the Student Activity Center. They also brought up the idea of gazebos being placed around campus.

Campus Life Committee talked about commemorating Dr. Stefan Forrester, UM’s philosophy professor that passed away this summer. Working with Faculty Senate, they have decided to name Humanities Hall room 308 after Forrester.

In old business, Riley Watkins discussed how the SGA budget would be worked on and passed at the Sept. 20 meeting. This meeting was closed to everyone outside of Senate.

Siegel also discussed other upcoming UPC events, Family Feud on Sept. 21, bubble soccer on Sept. 26, bingo night on Oct. 17, Haunted Attraction on Oct. 30, Vegas in Vallo on Nov. 14, Campus Spa on Nov. 27 and Midnight Breakfast on Nov. 30.

Next, Watkins went over this month’s WOW Weekend events, which included karaoke and pizza on Sept. 22 and a DJ, photobooth and Zaxby’s on Sept. 23. She also said there will be a blood drive on Oct. 10 and 11.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Dr. Kaley Martin brings new perspectives—and an Emmy—to mass comm department

By RACHEL RAIFORD.

After a yearlong search for new professors in the Mass Communication department, Dr. Kayley Martin, a Montevallo alum, has returned to teach alongside the professors that shaped her.

Dr. Bruce Finklea, Martin's former professor and now colleague, was a part of the search committee that elected her as a candidate.

"Kaley was an outstanding student, and she's done some incredible things with her research during grad school. Now that she's back at UM as a professor, I love getting to see her teach and influence the next generation of storytellers," said Dr. Finklea. "When she did her teaching demo during her on-campus interview, students really responded well to her teaching style, and we knew that she'd have no problem fitting back in at UM as a faculty member."

"I had job offers from three other universities, but as soon as Montevallo entered the chat, I knew that's where I wanted to be," Martin said. "Getting to come back to the place that shaped me, and work with the same faculty that shaped me is an amazing, interesting experience."

After graduating from Montevallo, Martin worked in UM's admissions office, where, aside from her admissions work, she also did some marketing. In order to consolidate their messaging within the office, she actively worked on marketing through their social media channels and through email campaigns.

Martin also aided in upholding the university's image across all platforms. Not only did she run campaigns on the university's main social media accounts, she also worked with campus organizations to manage the university's social media image across other platforms.

At the time, the University of Montevallo didn't have a videographer, so Martin also ran a few social media campaigns as the acting videographer.

Throughout her time working for the university, Martin also ran her own small videography business, Kaley Martin Co. She started her company while she was a student.

"I wanted to gain out of the classroom experience. I wanted to keep practicing the fundamentals and learning about video," said Martin. "It all began through a close friend who asked me to be the videographer for her wedding."

Martin was extremely successful through her business. She expressed how she eventually had to turn some clients away due to the demand she was getting. From styled bridal shoots to corporate branding, Martin's work has been featured in a number of magazines including "Bride's Magazine" and "Shelby Living."

In 2019, she decided to close her business to pursue her master's degree. She continued to do some freelance work while in the classroom.

Martin is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Alabama. She's set to graduate with her Ph.D. in the spring.

While attending the University of Alabama, Martin was one of six videographers on the university's Strategic Communications team. Here, she held the positions of Broadcast Producer and Senior Creative Producer. The team completed all of the marketing for the university, including the "Where Legends are Made" commercial, which won her a Southeast Emmy earlier this year.

"I was the only girl on the team, but it was a lot of fun!" said Dr. Martin. "Getting to work for, basically, a video production house but under a brand. It was all of the things I liked combined into one."

The "Where Legends are Made" campaign consists of a thirty-minute commercial for the university. It premieres at the first home football game.

Martin expressed how thrilling it was to be immersed in working on the campaign—which included spending several months planning the project, followed by seven months of shooting the commercial.

"We wanted to feature about four students while combining little breakout stories about their lives as students at the university," said Martin.

The campaign ran on social media, email campaigns, billboards and other platforms.

"The Emmy's are thought of as a news or broadcast thing, but they're branching into corporate and social media documentaries. It's so fun to tell people that I won one for a social media campaign," said Martin.

Before her business success and time at UM, Martin attended Gadsden State Community College for two years. She expressed her frustrations with picking one major while at the college. She was interested in many different fields, so when it came time to pick her second university, she was drawn to the Montevallo's Mass Communication department.

"I came for a tour and as soon as my feet hit the bricks I knew that this is where I was supposed to be," Martin said.

She completed the mass communication program along with her minors, business and public relations, in two years, leading her to graduate in 2016. Social media wasn't offered as a minor at the time, so these programs were the closest she could get.

Aside from her scholastic life, Martin is married and has a son, Henry. She expressed her love for her golden doodle, Baker, and cat, Piper. She lives in Clanton, where she enjoys her life with her family.

"Other than some freelance work, I really just mom," Martin said.

Although she doesn't work weddings anymore, she says she's at a place in her career where she can do what she chooses. She does do family shoots, portraits and some corporate work. Due to her new life as a mom, she says her time is a lot different right now, so picking and choosing is her "cup of tea."

Martin plans to continue teaching at the university for the foreseeable future, and she has plans to help nurture and grow the department.

Council approves new budget

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

In a brief meeting on Sept. 25—lasting approximately ten minutes from start to finish—the Montevallo City Council approved the city's budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

The budget, which was introduced at the previous council meeting on Sept. 11, was passed unanimously by the council without any discussion.

The proposed budget plans for nearly $8.3 million in revenue and nearly $7 million in expenditures. In discussion at the Sept. 11 meeting, City Clerk Steve Gilbert explained that some of the biggest changes in this year's budget allow for wage increases for city employees and increases in the cost of insurance.

After the council voted to approve the budget, Mayor Rusty Nix celebrated its passage, saying, "Congratulations on our third budget."

In addition to approving the budget, the council approved several measures related to events in the city. This included allowing Montevallo Main Street to close a section of Valley Street spanning from Shelby Street to the exit of Merchant's Alley—the parking lot behind some Main Street store fronts— and waive vendor fees for a Dia de los Muertos event. This event is set to be held on Nov. 2.

The council also approved closing Main Street for two parades. The first is the annual Fire Prevention Parade, which will be held on Oct. 7 at 10 a.m. The second will be Montevallo High School's homecoming parade, which will be held on Oct. 19 at 6 p.m.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Oct. 9, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Public notice: Campus voter drive on Oct. 10



The Shelby County Board of Registrars will be hosting a voter registration drive at the University of Montevallo on Oct. 10. The event will begin at 9 a.m. at Anna Irvin Dining Hall. Registrants will need their driver's license number in order to register to vote.

Sports

Fall sports update: seasons so far

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

With the fall semester in full swing, Montevallo's fall athletics teams have been busy competing. Here's an update on UM's cross country, golf, soccer, volleyball and esports teams' seasons so far, and what to expect from the start of the swimming, wrestling and basketball seasons.

Cross Country:

So far this season, Montevallo's men's and women's cross country teams have competed in two races—the Foothills Invitational hosted by Jacksonville State University on Sept. 1 and the Falcon Classic hosted on Montevallo's own cross country course on Sept. 15.

The men's team started their season off on the right foot, placing fourth out of 28 teams at the Foothills Invitational. Senior runner Drew Roberts finished first for the Falcons—placing 10th overall with a time of 15:44.00.

Roberts led the way for the men's team at the Falcon Classic as well, placing third with a time of 25:20.16 for the 8000m race. Overall, the men's team finished third out of 20 teams competing in the race.

The women's team has had similar showings so far this season. At the Foothills Invitational, the team placed seventh out of 27 teams. Senior runner Amber Fisher was the fastest runner for Montevallo, coming in at 29th place with a time of 15:25.60.

The women's team had a stronger showing at the Falcon Classic as well, finishing third out of 17 teams. Fisher, once again, was the fastest member of the women's team—coming in ninth place with a time of 19:00.15.

Next up for the teams is the UAH Invitational on Oct. 7.

Golf:

Montevallo's men's and women's golf teams have had mixed results so far this season, with both teams finishing strong at their first competition before placing lower at tournaments on the road.

Both teams had finished strong at the Full Moon Invitational, hosted by Montevallo on Sept. 11 and 12 at the Timberline Golf Club. The women's team placed first out of seven teams at this event, while the men's team placed second out of eight.

Caterina Oliveri finished first overall at the women's tournament scoring 3-over-par during the two-round event. For the men's team, junior Eric Boutwell led the pack, achieving a tied second-place finish at 5-under-par.

However, both teams seemed to lose their footing at their next competitions. The men's team finished sixth out of 14 teams at the Jay Jenison Cup, hosted in St. Augustine, Fla. on Sept. 25 and 26. Despite the lower overall finish, Boutwell still placed second in the tournament and tied a school record with his 10-under-par finish in the three-round event.

The women's team, meanwhile, finished 13th out of 17 teams at the NCAA Division II South Regional Preview, hosted in Cleveland, Tenn. on Sept. 18 and 19. Oliveri had the best performance for the Falcons, with her 13-over-par finish landing her in 30th place.

The women's team will compete again on Oct. 8 and 9 at the Golf Week Division 2 Challenge, hosted in Destin, Fla. Meanwhile, the men's team will be competing at the Midwest Regional Tournament in St. Albans, Mo. on Oct. 9 and 10.

Soccer:

Montevallo's men's and women's soccer teams could not be having more different seasons. The women's team has a strong winning record nearly halfway through their season, while the men's has struggled to gain wins.

Eight games into their season, the women's team currently has a winning overall record of 5-1-2, boasting wins both at home and on the road against Kentucky Wesleyan College, Trevecca Nazarene University, University of West Alabama, Valdosta State University and Shorter University.

Seven games into the season, the men's team currently has a losing record at 2-5—only gaining wins over Newberry College and Shorter University.

Up next for both teams are home games against University of West Florida on Oct. 6, with the men's game set to start at 5:30 p.m. and the women's game at 7:30 p.m.

Volleyball:

Thirteen games into the season, Montevallo's volleyball team is off to a rocky start with a 4-9 record. However, the team has retained a winning conference record of 2-1.

So far this season, the team has competed in three volleyball tournaments—competing at the UT Tyler Invitational in Tyler, Texas, the UAH Invitational in Huntsville and Peach Belt Conference/Gulf South Crossover hosted in Augusta, Ga.—placing the team on the road often.

The team's sole home game, against UAH on Sept. 21, resulted in a 0-3 loss for the Falcons.

The Falcons will take the home court again at their next game on Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. against Lee University.

Esports:

Under new head coach Ethan Bagget, Montevallo's esports team season is off to a to a hot-and-cold start. Their records report a loss to University of South Carolina Aiken in a Valorant tournament, followed by a win against Lander University in a Rocket League tournament.

The Esports team will compete again on Oct. 7 at 6 p.m. against Florida State University Panama City in a Valorant tournament.

Swimming:

Montevallo's men's and women's swimming teams will kick off their season on Oct. 7 with their annual Purple vs. Gold match. The event will begin at 9 a.m. in the Student Activity Center Natatorium.

Following this event both teams will compete again at home the following week on Oct. 14 against Millsaps College. Both the men's and women's teams hold a 3-0 history over Millsaps.

The rest of the teams' October will be spent on the road, competing at a meet at Berry College on Oct. 21 and at a meet at Sewanee on Oct. 27 and 28.

Wrestling:

While Montevallo's inaugural wrestling season is yet to begin, the team is gearing up for their debut as Montevallo's newest athletics team under Coach Daniel Ownbey.

The team's first meet is set for Nov. 5 at the Patriot Open, hosted by University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Ky. The team will then compete on the road three more times before their home opener on Nov. 15, where the Falcons will face-off against Midway University.

Basketball:

Montevallo's men's and women's basketball are also preparing for their seasons to start in November. For the women's team, this season will be the inaugural season for new head coach Olivia Chapman.

The men's team will open their season on Nov. 10 during the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Crossover Classic hosted in Miami Shores, Fla. The team will face-off against Nova Southeastern University, before playing Barry University on Nov. 11.

Following these two games, the men's team will take on Clark Atlanta University at their home opener on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m.

The women's team will also open their season at the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Crossover Classic in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. on Nov. 10. The Falcons' first game will be against Nova Southeastern University, followed by a game against Embry-Riddle University on Nov. 11.

The women's home opener is set for Nov. 14, where the Falcons will take on Birmingham-Southern at 11 a.m.

Coming up this week...

DATE	TIME	TEAM	HOME/AWAY
Oct. 3	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	Vs Lee University
Oct. 6	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	Vs University of West Florida
Oct. 6	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	At Auburn University Montgomery
Oct. 6	7:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	Vs University of West Florida
Oct. 7	8:00 a.m.	Men's and Women's Cross Country	UAH Invitational (Huntsville, AL.)
Oct. 7	9:00 a.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming	Purple vs Gold
Oct. 7	12:30 p.m.	Volleyball	At University of West Florida
Oct. 8	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	Vs Spring Hill College
Oct. 8	3:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	Vs Spring Hill College



“Bottoms:” the comedy renaissance begins

By CARTER JAMES.



Promontional material for “Bottoms.”

The genre of high school movies has been in purgatory for too long. Recent releases have either been period pieces or painfully trying to be as contemporary as possible. Gen Z has not had their “Clueless” or “The Breakfast Club” like previous generations have.

This is where the comedy trio of “Bottoms,” co-writer and director Emma Seligman, co-writer and star Rachel Sennott and star Ayo Edebri, come in.

“Bottoms” is the brainchild of Seligman and Sennott, who started working on the film while attending New York University together. Being touted as “Fight Club” for lesbians, the film wonderfully achieves that goal and sets the standard for what films made by and for Gen Z should be.

The genius of these three women was not unfamiliar to me before seeing “Bottoms.” Seligman’s feature debut, also starring Sennott, “Shiva Baby,” was one of my favorite films of 2021. Ever since then, I knew I would watch whatever Seligman would direct and whatever Sennott would act in. Edebri was also a clear stand out as one of the stars of “The Bear,” so I’m also locked into whatever she makes next.

Because of my liking for these three, and coming of age films in general, I was already sold. What I needed to be filled in on, however, was queer cinema. I knew if I was going to properly review such a landmark film for queer filmmakers and audiences, I would need to gain knowledge of the subgenre as a whole.

After initially seeing “Bottoms” in theaters, I decided to bridge my gaps of knowledge together by watching “D.E.B.S” and “But I’m a Cheerleader.” These films are contemporary staples of the subgenre. They succinctly display how camp is used within queer film.

Though camp has been associated with films such as Sam Raimi’s “Spider-Man,” the term derives from queer film theory. As defined by Susan Sontag in her essay, “Notes on Camp,” camp is, “A sensibility that revels in artifice, stylization, theatricalization, irony, playfulness, and exaggeration rather than content.”

Perdue.edu highlights how “some postmodernists, feminists, and queer theorists” believe that camp works against heteronormativity because of how it questions the construct of gender. Knowing camp is key to understanding queer cinema because reality is the last thing these films are grounded in.

The premise of “Bottoms” is simple: two lesbians start a self-defense club to hook up with cheerleaders. Though the film is short and straightforward, it is not exactly your typical high school movie.

The film takes the tropes of high school films and satirizes them to the nth degree, while keeping the heart and sappiness of coming-of-age romcoms. Where films such as “High School Musical” made musical theatre seem like a norm to its high school world, “Bottoms” makes vulgarity the currency in which students and the faculty trade.

Protagonists, PJ and Josie, played by Sennott and Edebri respectively, are publicly known as the “ugly, untalented gays” and are reminded of that throughout the film. The school’s football team is the sole focus of the school, as they count down by the day for the big rivalry game. Jeff, the star quarterback played brilliantly by Nicholas Galitzine, is revered as a god—where his team pampers him and the school bows down to him. He and his team have a biblical mural in the cafeteria. The most absurd thing about the film is the idea around the school rivalry. The front for the self-defense club is successful because Hungtington, the rival school, has been harassing women. This absurdity is further reiterated when the audience learn that Huntington has a history of murdering players during the game.

With a world full of shocking absurdities, PJ and Josie find a way to be scummiest and funniest people in their high school. Sennott and Edebri have cemented their names in history as a legendary comedy duo, because, once they get going, they don’t stop. Their riffing is effortless, constantly building off of each other and never stealing the spotlight from one another. When something ridiculous happens in the film, the two already have a quip or back-and-forth ready to spit out.

Because the absurdity and camp of the world is taken with full seriousness, the comedy wonderfully flourishes. The rest of the cast gives iconic and scene-stealing moments whenever they are on screen as well. Marshawn Lynch is the MVP of the cast because he shows how his acting career should’ve started much sooner.

Though its technically a satirical comedy, it never feels like the film is breaking the fourth wall to point out everything is ridiculous, allowing for issues such as homophobia and misogyny to be pointed out in a clever way, rather than just acknowledging these are still issues.

At its core, “Bottoms” has plenty of heart. There are plenty of tender moments where the high school absurdity and the femcel facades of PJ and Josie are taken away. What’s left is a story about how self-centered we can be when searching for love. PJ and Josie may have just wanted to lose their virginity, but they learned that their bad intentions lead them to understanding their peers rather than commodifying them.

Great comedy and character work aside, this is one of the best-looking comedies I’ve ever seen. Seligman is only 28 years old, and effortlessly shows off her talent in only her second feature film. “Bottoms” was a giant leap for her in terms of scale and budget, as “Shiva Baby” is less than 90 minutes, and mostly took place in a house. “Bottoms” is ambitious and action packed with multiple set pieces that most blockbuster directors would have trouble shooting at the level of skill and competence Seligman shows in frame.

The cinematography of the film is gorgeous and a clear standout from most high school movies. Cinematographer Maria Rusche has distinct lens and lighting choices, giving the film a shallow and anamorphic look that’s rich with depth. Production and costume design is what sells you the world of “Bottoms.” No character looks the same, nor do they look like their clothes came from mannequins at Old Navy. Charli XCX and Leo Birenbirg’s score is great and has a fun use of electronic music that adds to the teen angst that seeps through the frame.

“Bottoms” is an absolute blast from start to finish. Even starting out of the gate with pure camp and absurdity, the film still finds a way to one up the last shocking or hilarious moment. This film embraces the tropes of high school films and uses the staples of the queer subgenre to be one of the few movies that truly speaks to Gen Z, rather than berating us with trends and stereotypes. The trio of Seligman, Sennott and Edebri have more than proven that they’re heralding in a new era of comedy, and I’m more than excited to see where they take the genre next.

8.5/10

Dr. Mahaffey to host 18th class trip to New Orleans

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Dr. Paul Mahaffey, Chair of the English Department at the University of Montevallo, loves New Orleans. He loves it so much, in fact, that he has been offering a class about the cultural geography and literature of New Orleans for almost 20 years now.

The class, which is offered every fall semester, gives students a chance to explore the culture of New Orleans through supporting literature with an optional class trip to ‘The Big Easy.’ This year’s trip is set for Oct. 18-22.

Mahaffey first became interested in New Orleans as both a research topic and fascination after reading John Kennedy Toole’s novel “A Confederacy of Dunces,” which follows protagonist Ignatius J. Reilly as he travels the streets of New Orleans in the 1960s.

“New Orleanians consider it to be their bible,” said Mahaffey. “The irony was that I had never been to New Orleans, and I said, ‘you know, I’ve got to check this place out.’ I went and it was–I was immediately reminded of the places that I visited in Europe when I was in the Navy,” he continued. “Spain and especially France, and just that European feel to it.”

New Orleans has influences from multiple international cultures which developed distinct types of architecture, cuisine, music, folklore and subcultures throughout the city.

Mahaffey, a UM alum, first visited New Orleans during his senior year. His curiosity was immediate, he said.

“I grew up in the South, I grew up in Alabama, and I said, this is not the South. This place is really different.”

In 2006, one year after New Orleans was struck by Hurricane Katrina, Mahaffey took his first group of students from the class to New Orleans. This fall will mark his 18th trip.

“We have not missed—even in 2020, even in the COVID year—we went to New Orleans. It was strange, really strange to see Bourbon Street shut down at 11 o’clock. Usually, it’s around 11 that Bourbon street really opens up,” said Mahaffey.

Bourbon Street, located in the French Quarter of New Orleans, is seen as symbolic of the city’s culture.

The class itself is hosted by the UM English Department, and aims to investigate the cultural and environmental geography of New Orleans through both news and literature. Novels that tell the stories of New Orleanian history, culture, cuisine, physical environment and tragedy, such as the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, are used as primary resources for learning more about New Orleans. The scope of literature includes both fiction and non-fiction.

While Mahaffey’s literature lineup differs from year-to-year, novels such as “Liquor,” written by Poppy Z. Brite, reflect the culture of New Orleanian cuisine and tells the story of Rickey and G-Man—two cooks who try to open their own restaurant with recipes influenced by different types of liquor.

“Wading Home,” another previously novel used for the class, written by Rosalyn Story, describes the culture of tragedy by following father and son, Simon and Julian Fortier, as Julian attempts to locate his father after being displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Students in the class have, in the past, examined news reports of contemporary events in New Orleans, held discussions surrounding New Orleans’ many subcultures, written essays about assigned readings and reflected on their experience if they attend the class trip.

Mahaffey believes it essential to investigate the literature of New Orleans and that UM’s English Department, and the university in general, are complementary to the subjects of the class.

“I graduated from Montevallo as an English major and one of the things that I just loved about the English department–it seemed to be distinctive from other English departments,” he said. “There was some quirkiness to the department that, to me, kind of set it apart.”

As for the university as a whole, Mahaffey said, “To me, UM is a nice reflection of New Orleans because of the emphasis on the liberal arts, because of the, you know—the uniqueness of the student that goes to Montevallo. I kind of feel like it’s the perfect match.”

Mahaffey encourages all UM students to visit New Orleans.

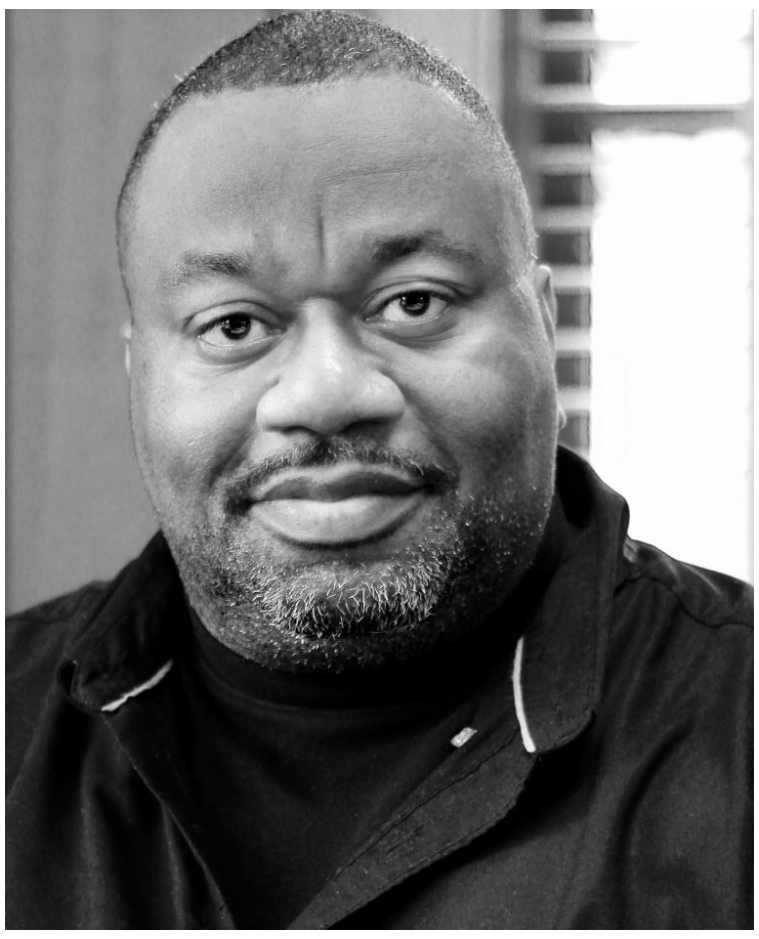


Photo of Dr. Mahaffey. Photo courtesy of the University of Montevallo.

“With every group of UM students that have gone—they’ve been at home,” said Mahaffey. “They’ve found something that attracted them to the city, they’ve found something that, what’s the best way to put this—let them be whoever they want to be.”

If you are interested in taking the class, it is typically offered every fall semester.

If you are a student who is interested in joining the trip to New Orleans, you do not have to know anybody in the class. However, Mahaffey requests that you fill out a field trip waiver form prior to attending. Mahaffey welcomes friends, significant others, family and other interested parties in joining the trip.

Regarding the trip to New Orleans specifically, Mahaffey said, “If you go, you’ll find something that you’ve been looking for.”

Food review: Baba Java's fall drink menu

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor, ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor, LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor

Despite the fact that daily high temperatures remain in the mid-80s and wearing a comfy, cozy sweater seems insufferable at the moment, fall is upon us all. Pairing with the autumn equinox is a new slate of seasonal drinks at local coffeeshop Baba Java. Here's what drinks The Alabamian's staff felt was worth ordering.

Creamy Apple Cider

3/5

This hot drink, made of apple juice, caramel, autumn spice syrup and oat milk, tastes like liquified apple pie filling. As an honest and upright reviewer, I must confess that I messed up in ordering this because I thought there would be coffee in it—there is not—and that my score may be skewed because I was sad there was no coffee in it on account of the fact that I am a coffee fiend. However, I am also an oat milk fiend, so the prominent use of oat milk in this drink earned it some extra points. If you're not a coffee fan, or you're looking for a caffeine-free option, this beverage is a comfy, cozy option that embodies an autumnal feel in a fall seasonal beverage landscape—perhaps, hellscape if you're trying to avoid coffee—that is otherwise dominated by the likes of pumpkin spice lattes.

Pumpkin Pie Latte

4/5

I really do not know why I like this so much. I am a notorious pumpkin flavoring hater. Pumpkin spice coming back is like the start of flu season for me. If you want something that is a sickeningly sweet, "it's fall y'all" style, pumpkin syrup mouth explosion, this is probably not what you're looking for, but for me it was pretty good. I was a little befuddled at how much I liked it to be honest. It tasted so similar to the honey habanero latte—which is my favorite drink there. At first, I thought they just mixed up my order, or maybe slipped in a little habanero infused honey—an act of espionage most certainly undertaken because they know my sensibilities and reputation as the Montevallo equivalent of the critic from "Ratatouille." After drinking some more, I could tell it was a different drink however, and it was a pretty good one. It had that good burnt bacon iced coffee taste I like with just a teensy bit of pumpkin flavor on the back end. Reluctantly, I'm a fan.

The Lumberjack Latte

3/5

This is a pretty standard sugary latte, but I could definitely see a lumberjack drinking it somehow. Maybe not all lumberjacks, but definitely one who is in touch with his feelings and maybe takes bubble baths after a hard day of swinging ye olde axe. It warms your chest and tastes like something you could drink while pondering some pine trees and hanging out with your ox, or whatever lumberjacks do. The bourbon pecan syrup is nice enough. It doesn't exactly taste like drinking straight Irish coffee or pecan butter, but, rather, a nice much more muted in between. Like I said, it is a pretty standard latte, but it is tasty enough.

The Flannel Camel

4/5

The Flannel Camel includes Brazil cold brew, butter-pecan syrup and maple brown sugar cold foam. The drink is available in a 12 oz size and is only available over ice. While the description of the drink does somewhat match its taste, I experienced a heavy dose of cinnamon flavoring as well as liquor-reminiscent flavors upon the first sip. The cold brew is good quality, but if you're not one for semi-sweetness, I would pass on this drink. While the syrup and cold foam add sweetness to the drink, this autumnal option would be preferable to those who prefer less sugar in their coffee, which I enjoyed. While I do not think that the description completely panned out in the taste of the coffee, it was still tasty. My only wish is that the cold foam was a tad bit thicker, but, overall, it is a solid fall option for your coffee this semester.



Photo of coffee at Baba Java. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

Draft Oat

2.5/5

If you like oat milk—I mean, really like oat milk—then this is the beverage for you. The Draft Oat, made of nitro cold brew and oat milk, is easily the simplest drink on Baba Java's fall menu. Its simplicity might be its downfall, however, as there isn't much to the flavor other than the taste of oat milk. It's nice enough, but ultimately just taste like if you had a slightly bitter glass of oat milk.

Maple Brown Sugar Latte

4/5

I have a really hard time finding a latte that blows my socks off. When it comes to coffee, I can almost be a snob because I prefer to drink my coffee black than drink a syrupy watered down TikTok drink from Starbucks. I will say however, the Maple Brown Sugar Latte was a latte I would recommend to someone who has more old-fashioned taste buds like me. The maple brown sugar flavor is there but you are not over powered with sweetness. I ordered mine with almond milk and thought the flavors all meshed together really well. Maybe I liked it so much because the barista and I bonded over the Noah Kahan coming over the speakers. I still have to withhold a star because at the end of the day, I am still not ready to drink a hot and frothy drink at 2 p.m. in Alabama, but as soon as it actually starts to feel like fall, I will name this my drink of the season.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

It's time for The Alabamian's annual spooky short story contest!

Submit your creative writing works for a chance to be published in the Halloween edition of The Alabamian.

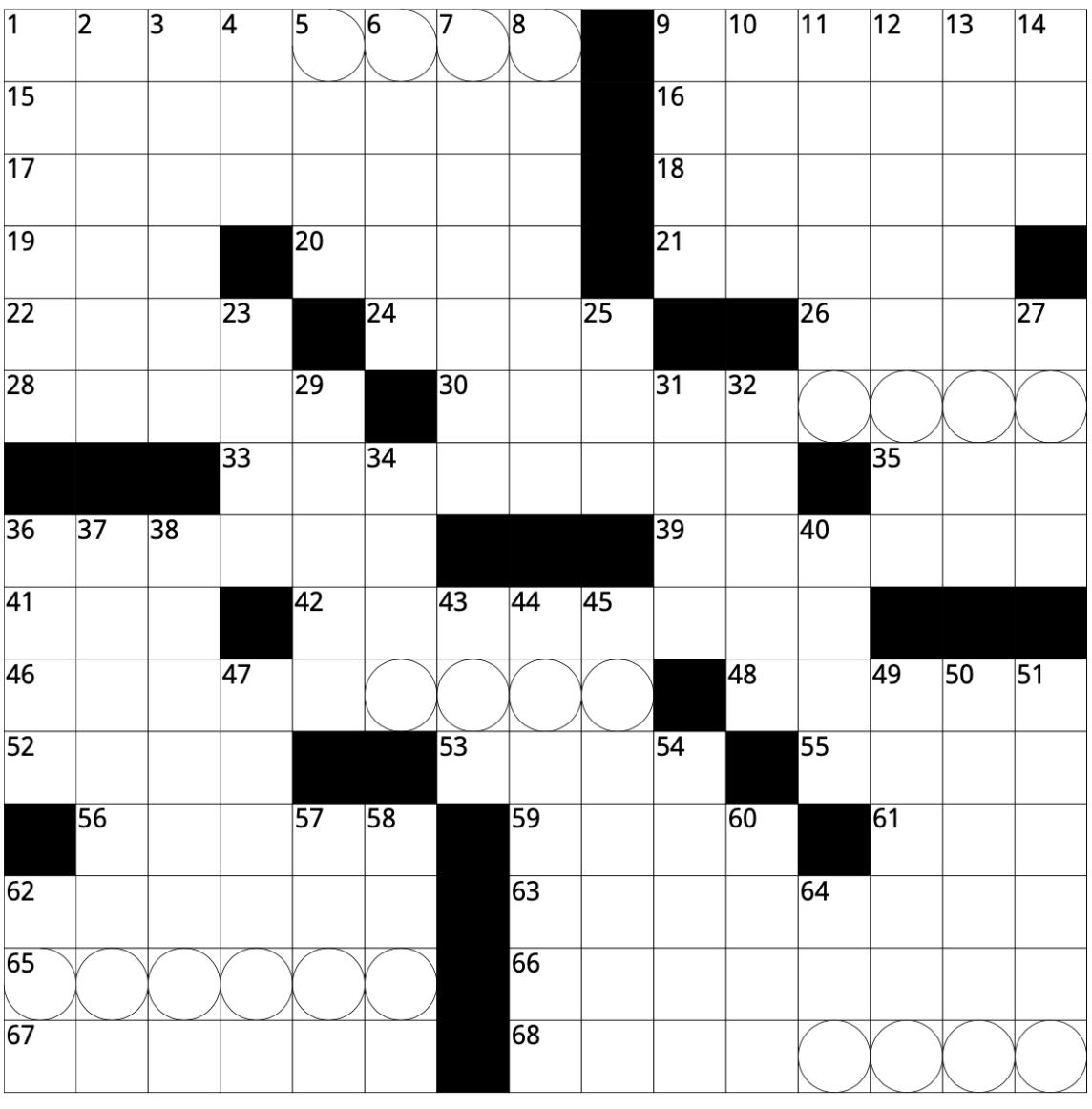
Stories should be no more than 3,000 words and are due by Oct. 22. Send all stories to alabamian@montevallo.edu.

Playlist: Songs of Fall

You've heard of songs of the summer, now get ready for songs of the fall. Listen to the songs The Alabamian's staff think you should have on repeat this fall.

Crossword

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Sudden influx of cash
9. Missing
15. Spelling rule
16. One who's calling
17. One way someone shares memes
18. Movie such as "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull"
19. Bright-eyed
20. Dangerous heart condition, abbr.
21. The Beatles' "I __ ___ Walrus"
22. Feature of many wedding cakes
24. Sponsor of the Rams' and Chargers' stadium
26. Ravens linebacker Zachary and "Catch-22" pilot
28. One who rows a boat
30. Cascade
33. Not yet, but will become
35. Fib
36. Insurance benefit
39. Like some jean bottoms
41. Praiseful poem
42. Jean Rhys novel "The Wide _____ Sea"
46. Day's end
48. Online shopping feature
52. Mo. city
53. Hole maker
55. Region
56. South Korean capital
59. Chimney sweeps' adornment
61. Surgery sites, for short
62. Request from a fan at a concert, perhaps
63. Acidic brews
65. Season that began on Sept. 23 this year, or a synonym for the circled parts of 1-Across, 30-Across, 46-Across and 68-Across
66. Registrant for class
67. Way "Wheel of Fortune" host Sajack may introduce himself on the phone
68. Picnic spoiler

Down:

1. Send money to
2. Spain's peninsula
3. Certain fisherman
4. "Infinite Jest" author, for short
5. Enemies
6. Neighborhoods
7. Radiohead single from "OK Computer"
8. Claim of some diet food
9. "Avatar: The Last Airbender" creature
10. Ala. iron city
11. In a way
12. Captivate
13. Always tell the truth
14. Start to cycle or angle
23. Take a break
25. Skater Midori
27. Musher's vehicle
29. Cook in the oven
31. Recedes like a tide
32. Actress Witherspoon
34. "Frozen" snowman
36. Wears
37. Deletes from a movie
38. Overlooks
40. "Livin' la Vida ____"
43. The only album credited to Paul and Linda McCartney
44. One in charge of making lips shiny, perhaps
45. City with a Penn State campus
47. Trailer park connection
49. Type of alpine pine
50. Put film back on a spool
51. Graduation souvenir
54. Nymph of Muslim paradise
57. Hesitant address to a mother by a country boy, perhaps
58. Pre-Easter time
60. 1982 Disney film
62. Italian counterpart to BBC
64. Sitcom alien

Scan for answers!



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:
Go rake your yard, Aries. It's hard work, but you can jump into a big pile of leaves afterwards—and how much more autumnal can you get than that? Just watch out for ants.

Taurus:
Host a bonfire, Taurus. Get dangerously close to the fire and contemplate your love for roasted hot dogs. Also listen to Steely Dan while you do so.

Gemini:
Roast marshmallows on a pumpkin-scented candle in your house, Gemini. Make sure you get them good and well-done. Disregard the smoke alarm.

Cancer:
This fall you should get away from the hustle and bustle of college life, Cancer. Maybe take a semester off and become a seaman on a crabbing vessel. Live off the fat of the sea.

Leo:
Wear a lot of plaid, Leo. Flannels, pants, kilts—just anything plaid. Maybe make your whole life plaid. Paint your house plaid.

Virgo:
Contemplate the season of decay, Virgo. Get really sad with it too. If you're not crying for two hours straight, you're doing it wrong. Trust me, it'll be cathartic.

Libra:
Put a putrid amount of pumpkin spice syrup in your coffee, Libra. You will need it.

Scorpio:
Knit your own sweater, Scorpio. Put your favorite bald celebrity's likeness on the front of it. Wear it with pride knowing you're honoring your favorite bald celebrity with your hard work and handiness.

Sagittarius:
Go on a hay ride, Sagittarius. Jump off and get lost in the field. You might find some new friends.

Capricorn:
Don't rake your yard, Capricorn. Take all of the advice we gave to Aries and do the opposite. Find some ants. Start an ant farm.

Aquarius:
Get lost in the corn maze, Aquarius. Make the attendants send your mother in after you.

Pisces:
Go get your favorite soup, Pisces. Let nothing stop you from getting this soup. Go to the ends of the Earth for this soup. Or just call your mom, if that's what it takes. You've earned this soup.

The Alabamian

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Outdoor Scholars host fish fry to pay fishing team member's medical bills

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Outdoor Scholars at the fish fry. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

On Sept. 29, Montevallo's Outdoor Scholars and Fishing Team held a fish fry on Main Quad. Although the Outdoor Scholars have held fish fries in the past, this year's event was unique because all proceeds went to help fishing team member, Easton Fothergill, and his family pay for medical treatment he received for a brain abscess earlier this year.

Fothergill, who was hospitalized in August because of the abscess, spent two weeks receiving treatment at UAB before returning to his home in Minnesota to recover.

"He started getting real bad migraines and he's usually got migraines, but they just got progressively worse. Ultimately, it ended up being an abscess on the inside of his brain," said fishing team member Tyler Cory who was present selling plates on Main Quad.

Cory continued, saying, "That's why we're trying to raise money for his family—trying to help with the medical bills—because obviously two weeks at UAB is a little expensive."

From 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Outdoor Scholars sold $10 plates that included fried fish, coleslaw, hushpuppies, fries and water.

The fish sold by the Outdoor Scholars was farm-raised swai from an Alabama hatchery, fried at the Outdoor Scholars pavilion behind Bearden House. All other food was donated, which according to Cory, helped cut down on the cost of the event—ensuring enough money reached Fothergill.

While plates were sold on Main Quad, Outdoor Scholars at the pavilion worked simultaneously to prepare plates and batter and fry fish.

Cory said, "All the frying equipment is ours and we've got a whole bunch of Outdoor Scholars down there working to get it done."

Speaking on the significance of the event, fishing team member Tommy Loper, who was helping prepare plates, said, "It's really important to us because you know, since we're such a big team, it allows us to bring everybody together. And we bond over this, it's something that we like to do—is cook and come together and listen to music and fry fish—and also it gives us an opportunity to give back to one of our teammate's families."

Fothergill, who has now recovered, went on to win the 2023 Strike King Bassmaster College Series Classic Bracket Championship held on Milford Lake in Kansas from Sept. 29-Oct. 2.

Among the eight anglers present in the college bracket, four were UM students. Alongside Fothergill, UM Fishing Team members, Nick Dumke, Brody Robison and Jack Alexander also competed in the competition.

For winning the college bracket, Fothergill won $7,500, a 2024 Toyota Tundra and a Nitro Z20 Bass Boat and will be able to compete in the Bassmaster Classic, the highest-paying tournament in professional bass fishing.



Outdoor Scholars with fish plates. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

U.S. poet laureate visits Montevallo, delivers Dancy Lecture

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Just hours after being announced as a 2023 MacArthur Fellow, U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón stood on stage at the University of Montevallo's Center for the Arts, reading a selection of her poems to a crowd of students, faculty and other guests as part of the Dancy Lecture Series on Oct. 4.

Limón is the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States—earning that title in July 2022 when she was appointed by the Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

"I want to be the largest animal that ever existed." Limón read to the audience from her poem "The Whale & the Waltz Inside of It," from her book "Bright Dead Things." Limón's poems focus on themes of hope, race, family and belonging, while using natural imagery as a way to explore these abstract concepts.

Limón, who has authored six poetry books, read 12 poems in total at the event, including the poem "A New National Anthem," which Limón referred to as one of the most difficult poems she's ever written.

"Perhaps, the truth is, every song of this country has an unsung third stanza, something brutal snaking underneath us as we blindly sing the high notes with a beer sloshing in the stands hoping our team wins," she read from this poem, which focuses on the United States' legacies of violence and racism through an examination of the national anthem.

Following her reading, Limón fielded questions from audience members during a Q&A session. Limón also participated in a book signing following the event.

The Dancy Lecture Series, which was established in 1939, is meant to bring speakers from the fields of literature and theatre to deliver an address at Montevallo every two years. However, Limón was the series' first lecturer since 2014, when playwright Qui Nguyen delivered the lecture.

Limón's day at Montevallo was not limited to her appearance at the Dancy Lecture, however. Prior to that event, she also met with a group of creative writing students from Dr. Jim Murphy's poetry class and with students in Montevallo's M.A.D.E. program.

In her meeting with poetry students, Limón discussed poems from her most recent book, "The Hurting Kind," and fielded questions about her inspiration and writing process from students.

During this time, Limón discussed how writing about her family impacts her work—particularly focusing on how the recent death of her grandmother, who is featured prominently in "The Hurting Kind," has changed her feelings towards her writing.

"I'm sort of in this interesting moment because I wrote so much about her in the book where I'm like, 'Oh, right. This is what happens when you have someone who's a central figure to your writing that then passes,'" Limón said.

"Of course, she was 98, it's not like, you know, she was never going to go, but in my mind she wasn't. And so, it has changed my relationship to the work a little bit because I'm having this sort of push-pull of what I want to read and what I don't want to read from the book," she said.

Later that afternoon, in her meeting with M.A.D.E. students, Limón answered questions from a student panel, focusing heavily on her Mexican heritage and the roles mentors have played in her life.

"To me mentorship is something that I've always been interested in, in not only how it works, but how it fails," Limón said in response to a panel question about the roles that mentors have played in her life.

"I think that occasionally I have been failed by mentors in my life. And I think a lot of that is simply because I didn't know how to advocate for myself. And I'm still in a place, you can imagine, that I still feel like I have to remind myself how to advocate for myself. And so, when I think about the mentors I've had, one of the biggest things they've taught me—the really wonderful mentors—is how to speak up when I feel very uncomfortable, speak up when it puts me at risk. But also, navigate places where I still need to be free as an artist," she continued.

Montevallo was the first place Limón visited after being named a 2023 MacArthur Fellow that morning. The MacArthur Fellowship is an $800,000 award granted to writers, scientists, artists, social scientists, humanists and entrepreneurs by the MacArthur Foundation meant to advance and facilitate their future creative works. There were 20 award recipients this year from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds—from legal scholars to a cellular biologist to visual artists.

While Limón was formally announced as a MacArthur Fellow that day, she learned she had received the fellowship four weeks prior. The award left the normally verbose Limón at a loss for words.

"You know, honestly, it feels like such an overwhelming honor that it's hard to find words for it," Limón said when asked about her reaction to the award.

"I think one of the things it offers is a deep permission to really lean into whatever I want to do next artistically, and that to me feels really important right now, especially serving in this role as the laureate for the next two years," she said. "Being able to envision beyond that and what things I want to make and create and conversations I want to have have really opened up based on this fellowship."

As for future creative projects, Limón said, "I'm thinking about more collaborations. I'm thinking about putting together my 'New and Selected,' and also ways in which I can look to be even more free on page."

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Letter from the editor: Just chilling is a virtue

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

One thing that I've realized about myself recently is that I'm bad at having fun.

Or relaxing.

Or taking it easy.

Now that I think about it, I'm bad at not being at least a little bit stressed out at all times.

But can you blame me? There are so many good things to be thinking about, worrying about, obsessing over at all points in time. For instance: the fact that I'm a senior and I'm graduating soon, meaning that my life as I know it is about to be over terrifyingly soon. Or, maybe the small mountain of homework that I'll inevitably have to do this week, only to reach the summit of that work just in time for next week's small mountain of homework to pop up.

And don't even get me started on this newspaper. This absolute joy—and I mean that very genuinely and not at all sarcastically—has the tendency to stress me out more than just about anything else. Will people turn their stories in on time? Will said stories be good when they are turned it? What am I going to write about in my letter from the editor? Will I have time to make the crossword this week? The list goes on and on.

Part of me thrives on stress. I'm a big believer in the concept of good stress—stress that motivates you to keep working and pushing forward. But I have also become somewhat of a stress junkie, and a problem has begun to emerge from that: my brain wants me to be working all the time in order to get my fix. It seems like even when I'm not actively working, even when I'm trying to relax, my mind is doing eight billion other things. And it always finds a way to cycle back around to worrying about everything.

I think of myself as an incredibly hard-working person. It's something I take a lot of pride in. A little—or a lot—of hard work has never scared me. Well, never scared me enough to not do it, I suppose.

But what good is all of my hard work if it's, ultimately, an unsustainable practice? The way that I've been working has been making a lot of my good stress turn into bad stress until the two are indistinguishable from one another and I've just become something worse than stressed—anxious.

Enter: the novel concept of trying to have fun.

Recently, I've had an epiphany. I've realized that part of taking care of myself—just like eating and sleeping—is making sure that I take the time to have fun, too. I mean real, genuine, completely-divorced-from-doing-work fun.

The point of this letter is not to say that I don't enjoy the work that I do or that I don't have fun doing it. I do—perhaps a little too much sometimes, which is where my problem lies. In many areas of life, moderation is key, and I have not been very moderate.

So, as of late, I've been making an attempt at having fun sometimes in simple ways. Making sure that I'm around people I love more often. Making plans so I know I have something to look forward to. Saying yes to life's little joys more often instead of letting them pass me by.

Often, I can't help but feel like I'm a bit out of my element in having fun, and I still frequently find my mind wandering away from the moment to whatever impending work I have to do next. But I also believe that practice makes perfect, and—in the words of a song that I love—just chilling is a virtue. Quite frankly, I've gotten pretty good at making myself feel miserable over the years, now it's time for me to try my hand at making myself feel nice.

My experiment in having fun has yielded some interesting and surprising results: I enjoy my life more overall when I make sure I'm taking time to do enjoyable things. Life is more beautiful. Work is less of a slog. Stress stays the good kind for a little bit longer than it would otherwise.

And while I wait on my Nobel Prize to come in the mail for this incredibly insightful, world-changing breakthrough, I'll be sure I continue to take it easy—or at least try to—sometimes.

Corrections

In Vol. 98, issue 3:
"UM offering increased family leave" did not include that the policy increasing parental leave will go into effect in August 2024.

In Vol. 98, issue 4:
"Director of 'Pill Hill' gives insights into production" stated that the play features seven main characters. The play features six. The article also stated that the play takes place over three acts when it takes place over two acts, and that it takes place in a bar when it takes place in a basement.

'Ahsoka' and the problem with Star Wars

By CARTER JAMES.

What the hell is going on?

There has been a downward spiral in Star Wars for the past four years. Just when things looked bad during the mismanaged sequel trilogy, the decline in quality has been sharp in the Disney+ era. I consider "The Rise of Skywalker" one of the most soulless films of all time, but at least it's well made from a filmmaking standpoint, which is more than I can say for some of the recent shows.

The current litany of shows made for Disney+ are laden with lazy writing and cheap visual presentation. There are some exceptions, though. Lucasfilm Animation has been doing their own great thing, and "Andor" is the best project to ever come out of Star Wars.

With "Ahsoka," there's multiple problems. The show is a sequel to the animated series "Star Wars Rebels," and is a part of the series of shows described as the "Mando-Verse"—in reference to the continuity it shares with "The Mandalorian." The endgame of the "Mando-Verse" is a movie that will conclude the titular series and associated shows such as "Ahsoka" and "The Book of Boba Fett."

Because you're required to watch an animated series and be in the know about current live-action series, there's pressure to do homework before starting "Ahsoka." Have I done my homework? Somewhat.

I've seen enough of "Star Wars Rebels" to be familiar with characters and significant events, but not enough to give a full rundown on the four-season plot. This is important because "Ahsoka" is a direct sequel to "Rebels," picking up where the series ended. I dredged through the current live-action Disney+ shows, so I already knew what to expect going in.

I can't say "Ahsoka" was a pleasant surprise or even the worst thing ever created. This show has given me the realization of one thing, and one thing only: the worst is yet to come.

"Ashoka" is passable. There's just enough conflict and just enough action and just enough character to make the show numbingly watchable, rather than borderline offensive. Our titular hero, Ahsoka Tano, lacks character progression or legitimate relevance to the story besides being a stoic teacher. The "Rebels" cast feels like robotic versions of themselves, having remnants of their character, while also being pseudo plot-devices for the inevitable film and potential subsequent seasons. To add insult to injury, the cast has taken lessons from the prequels' school of acting, being stilted, wooden and automatic.

The clear highlight of the series is Ray Stevenson's Sith mercenary, Baylan Skroll. Stevenson gives a memorable final performance, as he tragically passed away this May. Baylan is a character that has a nuanced look on his inner morality in relation to abandoning the Jedi order.

The wooden performances and lackluster character development are no fault of the actors or even most of the directors. Televison is the writers' format, however, it's showrunner and writer Dave Filoni who is to blame for the stagnated feeling of the series. Filoni is seen as a darling of the franchise, as he was the showrunner of "Star Wars the Clone Wars" and "Star Wars: Rebels," and is the executive producer and co-writer of "The Mandalorian" and "The Book of Boba Fett." His writing for live-action narratives are bare bones and weak, and "Ahsoka" is the prime example of his weakness.

Interesting ideas are there. Ahsoka is a reluctant teacher. Sabine is not a devout follower of the Jedi or force yet and is willing to honor Ezra Bridger's legacy as a Jedi. Baylan wants to reset the natural order of the galaxy through the force. The New Republic is already showing signs of weakness. Yet, none of this is told in an interesting way, both in storytelling and filmmaking.

The plot moves forward, and boxes are checked. Grand Admiral Thrawn returns, and Ezra is brought home. In between, nothing genuinely compelling happens. Our characters are virtually the same as they started, Ahsoka and Sabine's teacher/student relationship is now functioning, but that comes not from character growth, but plot convenience.

Despite the show feeling like a hollow setup, it was entertaining enough to continue watching each week. Episode five is the best episode of the series by a long shot because Ahsoka has to confront her relationship with Anakin Skywalker, her former master. The use of cameos has been eye-rolling at best in terms of current Star Wars, but Hayden Christensen's reprisal of Anakin actually served a purpose.

The technical aspects of "Ahsoka" are a mixed bag. The show doesn't look as cheap and ugly as season three of "The Mandalorian" or "Obi-Wan Kenobi," but is inconsistent. The direction, especially the two episodes directed by Filoni, is unremarkable. They get the job done but do it in the safest and most uninspired way possible. We've made it to the point where "Star Wars" is the main inspiration for "Star Wars." Sure, the action scenes are decent and watchable, but it doesn't hurt to have some energy and stakes. This franchise's situation is so dire that I'm begging for excitement and real drama—the same "Star Wars" that's supposed to be a space opera.

Someone needs to take the LED soundstage, the volume, away from Lucasfilm, because their projects went from looking like high budget epics to fan films. It's painfully obvious when two actors are standing in front of a screen. Not all episodes or scenes have dull cinematography, but enough to where there's a visual inconsistency throughout. It doesn't help that some costumes and makeup feel fake too. There's zero excuse for having these massive $100-$300 million budgets and the shows to come out looking like a YouTube video.

When all hope is seemingly lost, however, the Kiners still make a way to turn good product. Composing family, Kevin, Sean and Deana Kiner all do more than an excellent job in scoring this series. They make okay moments seem good and bad moments at least hummable. Listening to the score on its own makes me think they wrote music for a show that was actually good.

No one knows what the future holds for "Star Wars." What I believe, however, is that the series "Ahsoka" is an omen for what is to come. Poor writing, lackluster character development, bland direction and inconsistent visual presentation. It's a great time to be a Star Wars fan. This show has made me realize that there are new ways to surprise me, as the franchise reaches new lows. Even though it's watchable and entertaining, there's too much left to be desired in terms of storytelling. How am I supposed to believe that a theatrical movie will do a good job in wrapping up this story if the setup was poor to begin with? Maybe if I did my "Star Wars homework," I would get more out of the show than it had to offer.

5/10

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Local high school students get hands-on at Exploring Mass Comm Day

By M.K. BRYANT.

On Sept. 27, the University of Montevallo's Mass Communication Department invited local high school students to visit Strong Hall for Exploring Mass Communication Day. This annual event is intended to give students a preview of the major.

Throughout the morning, students participated in workshops simulating classes in the mass communication department's broadcast production and multimedia journalism concentrations. These workshops included running a film set, on-camera directing and producing, DIY mobile video production and newswriting.

The event was also covered by WBRC reporter Jonathan Skinner, a 1983 alum of UM's mass communication program.

This was mass communication instructor Kayley Martin's first Exploring Mass Communication Day as a UM faculty member.

"I got to come to Exploring Mass Comm Day when I was a staff member here years ago, just to help out, so it's really fun being on the faculty side now and telling the students how I was shaped by this program," Martin said.

Martin hosted the DIY mobile video production workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to show students different ways to get quality mobile footage without the use of professional equipment. These methods included DIY gimbal shots where a student sat in a rolling chair, filming while another student pushed the chair down the hall, and attaching their phones to bricks with rubber bands to see how it stabilized their footage.

Montevallo High School senior Isabella Ramirez said, "We were trying to work with stability with our phones by using something that's not as high technology and figuring out how to make it look the same way that expensive cameras and tripods and things like that look."

Members of the Strong Hall production team also helped to facilitate some of the workshops.

Junior mass communication major Kaitie Wayne helped set up equipment for Dr. Logan Freeman's film set workshop.

"We're really just there to help facilitate high school students getting to experience what it's like to be on set without actually having to be on set, because that's pretty stressful," Wayne said.

This workshop helped students familiarize themselves with different positions included on a film set.

"We delegate positions and have them act as if they're that position shooting a specific scene. They read the scene, and then we introduce lighting equipment and the difference that lighting equipment makes," Wayne said.

This was Wayne's third year working at Exploring Mass Communication Day.

"I'm just trying to encourage the students to attend our department by making them feel welcome," Wayne said.

In the on-camera directing and producing workshop, students learned about the different crew positions involved in a live studio production. This workshop was run by Dr. Jay Cofield, Dr. Samantha Kocan and Daniel Vest.

The newswriting workshop, run by Dr. Bruce Finklea, introduced students to the fundamentals of journalistic writing, including topics like AP style and when to use active and passive voice.

Exploring Mass Communication Day gave students the opportunity to learn new skills in a facilitated, hands-on environment.

"A lot of high school students don't really know what they want to do, so what we're trying to do is introduce them to this; to all the different ways that you can be a storyteller," Cofield said.

Council approves Highway 25 sidewalk construction

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Montevallo is one step closer to having sidewalks running along Alabama Highway 25, after the Montevallo City Council voted to accept a bid from a contractor to construct the sidewalks at their Oct. 9 meeting.

The council unanimously voted to accept a bid from Southeastern Sealcoating Inc. to construct sidewalks along Highway 25 for $642,670.

When discussing this bid, Mayor Rusty Nix pointed out that the city has been pursuing constructing sidewalks along Highway 25 since 2020. Earlier this year, the city opened the bid process for this project, but only received one bid that Nix described as coming in with an "extremely high" cost, prompting the city to reopen the bid process again.

City clerk Steve Gilbert said that the city worked with county officials to connect with more bidders for the rebidding process, and received four bids.

The bid from Southeastern Sealcoating was roughly $150,000 less than the lowest bid from the previous round of bidding, according to Nix, prompting him to say, "We did good."

Gilbert spoke to the financial feasibility of the project as well. He pointed out that funding will be derived from the Regional Planning Commission, with additional funding coming from the Montevallo Development Cooperative District.

"We're pretty much where we need to be budget-wise on that. We shouldn't have to ask for any additional funding at this point," said Gilbert.

Gilbert also provided a rough timeline for the project, saying that he expects work to start at the end of the month. Southeastern Sealcoating will then have 90 days to complete sidewalk installation.

The council also discussed another infrastructure related measure at their meeting, focusing on a resolution granting Yellowhammer Networks the right to construct, maintain and operate a fiber optic network within Montevallo city limits in order to provide internet and related services to Montevallo residents.

George Henry, the CEO of Yellowhammer Networks, was present at the meeting to discuss what this project would entail. Henry pointed out that the network will run throughout the city to provide subscribed residents internet services through their contracted provider, Omnipoint. He said he hopes that a fiber optic network in Montevallo will help bridge the digital divide.

"We're really going to work to increase the ability to have healthcare, jobs, education, you know, some of those opportunities that you don't have if you don't have some type of reliable broadband," said Henry.

The council did not vote on this measure at this meeting, but will at their next meeting on Oct. 23. If approved, the agreement will last for a 20-year period.

In addition to discussing these two measures, the council read a proclamation celebrating 30 years of carvings by Tim Tingle in Orr Park.

Tingle first began carving designs into damaged trees in Orr Park following a blizzard in 1993—sneaking into the park at night to do so. He got caught after doing his sixth carving, but, instead of punishing Tingle, the city set aside a portion of the park to allow him to continue.

Today, there are 53 tree carvings done by Tingle in Orr Park.

"Tim Tingle, through his time and talent, has given Montevallo a priceless gift that is immeasurable," said Nix. "No value can be placed on what one man has done that brings such a delight to the community and has brought folks from all over the world to Montevallo."

The council also heard from Montevallo student Aidan Peach regarding stop signs in areas near the University of Montevallo's campus. Peach, who was addressing the council on behalf of Montevallo's SGA, said that many people do not fully stop at stop signs in areas around campus.

"I've noticed that a lot of, like, students and also civilians as well that they use the stop signs as more of a yield, if that makes sense," Peach said.

As a solution, Peach suggested placing LED lights on stop signs in busy areas to draw attention to them.

"It might be more apparent that there's a stop sign there, stopping students from just flying through," he said.

In response, Nix asked the Montevallo Police Department to look into the feasibility of installing these features.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Oct. 23, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.



Falcons cross country race in Huntsville, gear up for the Gulf South Conference Championship

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



UM's Women's Cross Country Team. Photo courtesy of

The University of Montevallo's cross country team competed at the UAH Invitational on Oct. 7. The men's team finished in 20th place out of 44 teams and the women's team finished in 21st place out of 41 teams.

The men's team top finisher was senior Drew Roberts, clocking a time of 25:19.20 through 8k. He finished in 66th place out of 430 runners. The women's team top finisher was junior Natalie Warner, finishing the 5k in a time of 19:03.20. She finished 83rd out of 355 competitors.

Coaches and team members said they didn't feel like they had their best showing in Huntsville.

"We had so much left on both sides," said head coach Tommy Barksdale after the race, "everybody knows we left something out there today, but at the same time, everybody seems to be saying if this is our bad race, it's not that bad of a race."

The Falcons came into Huntsville after a long, tough period of training in between this race and their last, the Falcon Classic, which took place on Sept. 15 at UM's home course.

"Today was a good test of what the course feels like," said senior team captain Ana Watters.

Watters was the third place finisher for the Falcons, coming in 164th place overall in a time of 20:09.60.

The Falcons will head into a two-week training block before returning to Huntsville on Oct. 21 for the 2023 Gulf South Conference Championship.

"We're all kind of ready just to go back into it and have a big breakthrough," said Watters, "we've had a lot of weeks of tough training so we're ready for it to pay off."

Barksdale described the team's current state as replacing a lightbulb, turning the bulb so many times, the light is just about to come on and the team is right on the edge of something big.

"We are at a quarter of a turn of a lightbulb and we're gonna be beating a lot of people" said Barksdale, "it's just when is that gonna happen?"

After the conference championship, the Falcons will return home for likely their last race of the season, as the hosts of the NCAA Division II South Regional Championship.

"It means a lot [to host]," said Barksdale, "we get to sleep in our own beds, get to showcase our course."

Located behind the track and field and baseball facilities, the Montevallo home course was the host of last year's Gulf South Conference Championship, and this year will see some of the best competition in the South and Division II cross country race for the Regional Championship.

"The teams, both men and women, are proud and happy that we have a course on campus," said Barksdale.

The team is looking to get to work ahead of these two major races, and is hoping to put out a good showing to represent the university. The Falcons are counting on the support of other UM students to show up for the regional meet to help them finish strong. Watters said she hopes it "shows that our school is super supportive, it'll show that we're all one Falcon Nation."

Fall athletics schedule

DATE	TIME	TEAM	HOME/AWAY
Oct. 20		Volleyball	Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Crossover (Orlando, Fla.)
Oct. 20	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Union University
Oct. 20	7:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Union University
Oct. 21		Volleyball	Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Crossover (Orlando, Fla.)
Oct. 21	8:30 a.m.	Men's and Women's Cross Country	Gulf South Conference (Huntsville, Ala.)
Oct. 21	11:00 a.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming	at Berry College
Oct. 22	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	at Christian Brothers University
Oct. 22	3:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	at Christian Brothers University
Oct. 25	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at University of West Alabama
Oct. 27		Men's and Women's Swimming	at Sewanee
Oct. 27	5:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs Mississippi College
Oct. 27	7:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs Mississippi College
Oct. 28	2:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Mississippi College
Oct. 29	1:00 p.m.	Women's Soccer	vs Delta State University
Oct. 29	3:30 p.m.	Men's Soccer	vs Delta State University
Oct. 30		Men's Golf	Citrus Intercollegiate (Champions Gate National Golf Club, Orlando, Fla.)
Oct. 31		Men's Golf	Citrus Intercollegiate (Champions Gate National Golf Club, Orlando, Fla.)
Oct. 31	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	vs Shorter University
Nov. 1	11:30 a.m.	Women's Basketball	at Jacksonville State University (Exhibition game)
Nov. 3	6:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at UAH
Nov. 4	11:00 a.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming	vs Birmingham-Southern College
Nov. 8	1:00 p.m.	Men's and Women's Swimming	vs University of West Florida
Nov. 1	1:00 p.m.	Women's Basketball	Embry-Riddle University (Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.)
Nov. 10	1:30 p.m	Men's Basketball	Nova Southeastern University (GSC/SSC Challenge, Miami Shores, Fla.)
Nov. 10	5:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at University of West Georgia
Nov. 11	12:00 p.m.	Volleyball	at Valdosta State University
Nov. 11	1:00 p.m.	Women's Basketball	Nova Southeastern University (Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.)
Nov. 11	6:30 p.m.	Men's Basketball	Barry University (GSC/SSC Challenge, Miami Shores, Fla.)
Nov. 14	11:00 a.m.	Women's Basketball	vs. Birmingham-Southern College
Nov. 17	7:00 p.m.	Men's Basketball	vs. Clark Atlanta University
Nov. 25	2:00 p.m.	Women's Basketball	at UAH
Nov. 25	4:00 p.m.	Men's Basketball	at UAH
Nov. 27	5:30 p.m.	Women's Basketball	at Univeristy of West Alabama
Nov. 27	7:30 p.m.	Men's Basketball	at University of West Alabama
Dec. 1	5:30 p.m.	Women's Basketball	vs. Shorter University
Dec. 1	7:30 p.m.	Men's Basketball	vs. Shorter University

Coming up in UM Athletics...

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

- UM's volleyball team will be on the road in Orlando for the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Crossover tournament on Oct. 20 and 21. So far this season, the Falcons have had difficulty gaining wins while on the road, with an away record of 2-4.
- Both the men's and women's soccer teams will play Union University on the road on Oct. 20. The women's team has never been defeated by Union, boasting a six-win history over the Bulldogs.
- Men's and women's cross country will be racing in Huntsville for the Gulf South Conference on Oct. 21. This is the teams' last race before the NCAA Division II South Regional Championship is hosted on Montevallo's home course.
- The men's and women's swim teams will compete in their second race of the season at Berry College on Oct. 21. This will mark the first time UM's swim teams have faced Berry.
- Men's and women's soccer will continue their games on the road, playing at Christian Brothers University on Oct. 22. Both teams defeated Christian Brothers when they last met on Sept. 16, 2022.
- Volleyball will play on the road again, facing the University of West Alabama on Oct. 25. The Falcons have a seven-win history over the Tigers, beating them 3-1 at their last meet-up in November last season.
- UM's swimmers will compete on the road again on Oct. 27 at Sewanee. This will also mark the first time the Falcons have competed against Sewanee.
- It'll be a weekend of Mississippi match-ups in Montevallo. First, men's and women's soccer will return home after three away games, facing off against Mississippi College on Oct. 27. The women's team will take the field at 5 p.m., followed by the men's game at 7:30 p.m.
- Volleyball will also be competing against Mississippi College at home that weekend. Their game kicks off Oct. 28 at 2 p.m.
- Men's and women's soccer will host another home game that weekend, playing against Delta State University on Oct. 29. The women's team will face the Statesmen first at 1 p.m., followed by the men's game at 3:30 p.m.

How to survive midterms and beyond

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor, LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor, SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.

In the midst of midterms, everyone is feeling a bit hectic, and the stress setting in for the long-haul to the end of the semester can feel difficult to navigate. Here are some tips from The Alabamian's staff on how they like to destress when things feel tense.

Go plant mode:

Sometimes when things get majorly stressful, I find it helpful to think of myself as a little plant that needs to be carefully taken care of. Have I gotten some water? Have I eaten a little bit? Have I sat in direct sunlight? If the answers to these questions are no, then I make sure I take the time to do them soon.

In particular, I've found the sunlight component to be very helpful. Often, when I realize that I'm stressed out, part of the issue is that I've been living like a gremlin—in the dark, hunched over, antisocial. Getting outside for a little bit—or even just sitting by a sunny window—usually helps me feel a little bit more like a person and remember that life is beautiful even when my grades aren't.

It's a marathon, not a sprint:

Avoiding undue stress during midterms for me is entirely dependent on pacing myself. Trying to get ahead before exam week or before the majority of your workload crashes down on you is the best thing you can do. But when that doesn't work or isn't sufficient, it's still important to remember that it's a marathon and not a sprint.

While I won't condone pulling all-nighters, if you do find it necessary to not sleep as much as your doctor says you should, finding the correct time to do so is crucial. Make sure you don't have too many classes the next day and can find enough subsequent time to sleep. Most importantly, make sure you don't go more than two days without enough rest. While you may not feel tired in your stimulant and stress induced delirium after not getting enough sleep all week, chances are you will crash afterwards and not go to your 9 a.m. class for the entirety of the next week.

Also, make sure you have good music choices if you can listen to music while working. I find it helpful depending on what kind of work I'm doing to either play something that can easily fall into the background or something so high-intensity it will turn my stress into energy and scare me into doing work.

Additionally, when you're not working or sleeping make sure to find time to gorge yourself on food so you don't pass out on the way to class.

On the go, on the run:

I've been an athlete for most of my life, so I've always found some type of workout, especially running, to be a fantastic way to destress. Turning on your favorite music and heading out for a quick jog around campus is a great way to boost your energy, take your mind off of the task at hand and improve your overall health.

Running has so many health benefits, including strengthening your bones and muscles, and also triggers the release of dopamine, which improves your mood. It can also be built into a habit over time, helping contribute to a lifestyle of healthy living.

There are also so many great spots to run both on and around campus, with interesting views and new sights to see. Some great options are the cross country course, located behind the baseball field and the track, the University Lake and Orr Park.

Just let it happen:

I'm going to be very real with you: I do not know how to manage stress.

I have never known a plan of my own making that has been completely followed through. With everything I do, I tend to leave space for mishaps, for mental breakdowns, for unexpectedly long lines at McDonald's. This mindset is the same for schoolwork—specifically during the weeks of midterms and finals.

As we step into the thick of midterms, I find it best to not rely on my plans, even if those plans have time set aside for each assignment that will get them completed in exactly the time I will need to meet the deadline.

While my advice may not be the most sustainable or the most agreeable, I do find that it works. Well, for me, at least. Here's how it goes: I try my best to stick to a plan, but prepare to sacrifice sleep and food as I know other opportunities will arise. If I am asked to go to El Agave, I say yes, for the memories. But, if I have a midterm due the next morning, I prepare to be up until 4 a.m. completing said midterm.

For me, specifically, someone who has a hard time saying no to things, this is the only way that I get things done. Is it healthy? Absolutely not. But, the feeling of getting assignments done while also knowing that I got to hang out with my friends or do something fun is worth it.

In weeks like this, I do not expect to be a fully functioning human being, but I know that next week I will be able to sleep a little more and worry a little less. I guess, in essence, what I am telling you to do is sacrifice your health in order to meet your deadlines while having fun simultaneously. Just let it happen. This may not be a healthy piece of advice, but for me, it works every single time.

College Night Event Photos

College Night Mixer



A student poses with the purple side mascot. Photo by Carter James.



Students at the College Night Mixer. Photo by Carter James.

College Night Cookout



Photo of gold side members at the College Night Cookout. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

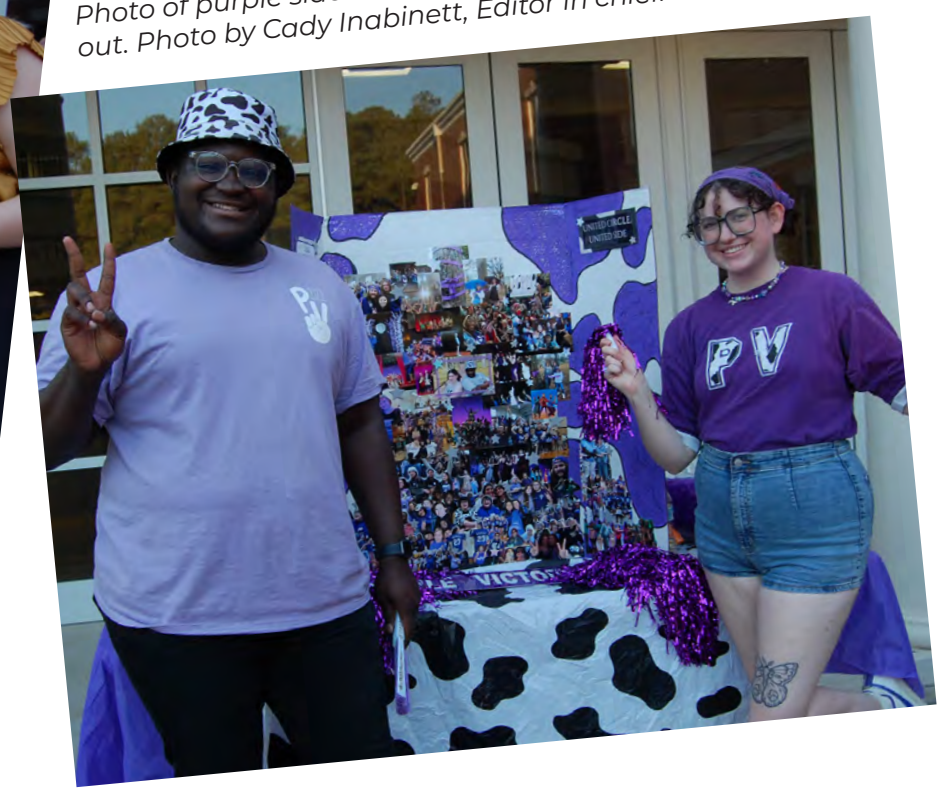
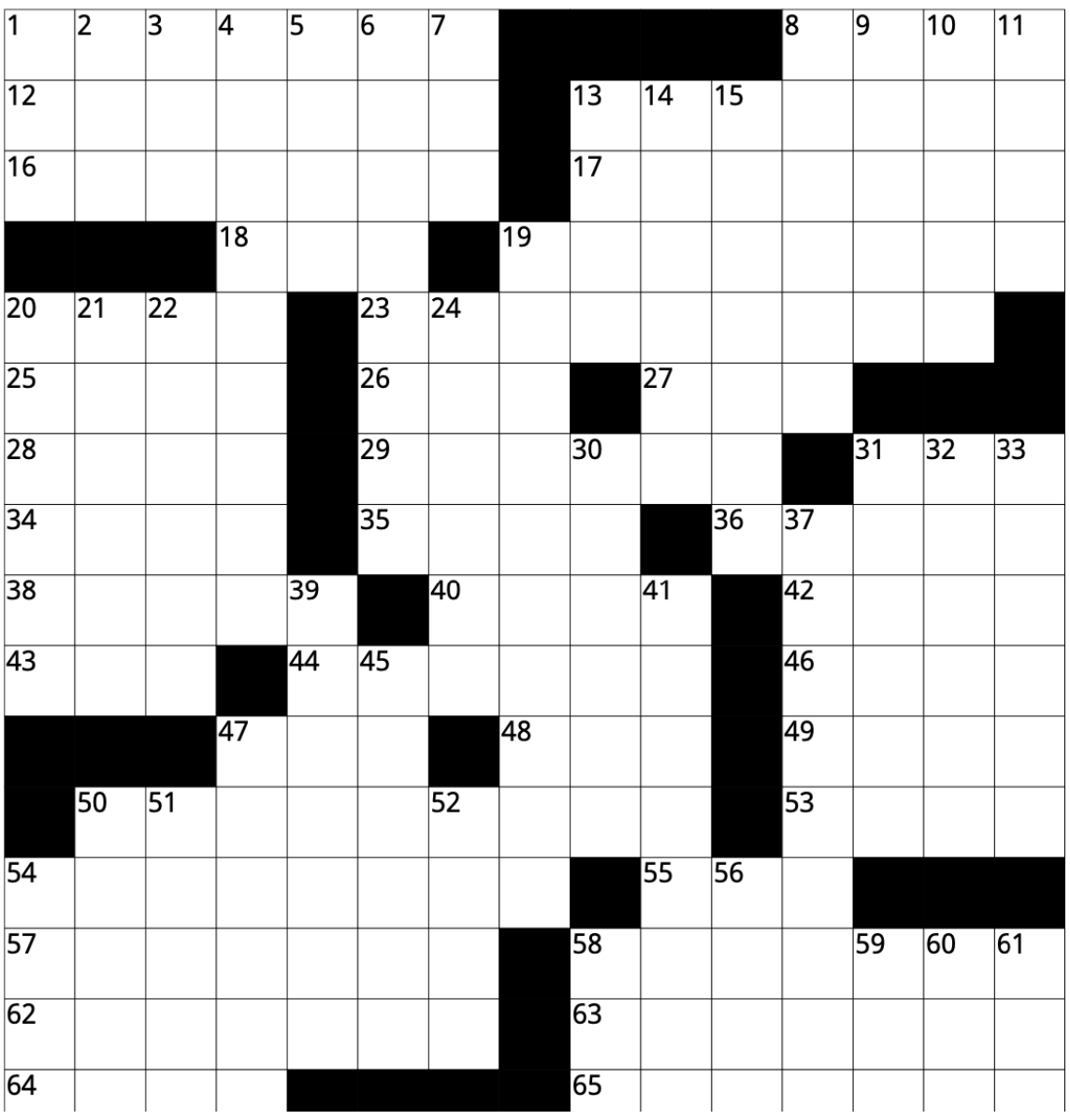


Photo of purple side leaders at the College Night Cookout. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

Crossword: Is it fate?

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. "Carrie" director
8. Go by
12. "When Harry Met Sally co-star
13. Fred of "Portlandia"
16. Sticks
17. Fishing spear
18. Initialism for Winnie the Pooh's creator
19. Mall store specializing in gag gifts
20. Frisbee, e.g.
23. Army eaters?
25. Enthusiastic about
26. Stephen of "V for Vendetta"
27. Dorm figs.
28. Small earring
29. Jumped
31. Simpson's convenience store owner
34. Nickname for basketball star Jordan
35. Avocado variety
36. Capital of France
38. Gather
40. Gyro meat
42. Ready to pick
43. "___ Misérables"
44. Setting for some TV crime shows
46. Uttered
47. Navajo painter Yah
48. "Whatever," in a text
49. Karenina or Faris
50. Too keen
53. Sunday service
54. Actor who appeared as himself in "Being John Malkovich"
55. Alias letters
57. What you earn when you make a lot of money
58. Miscellaneous tasks
62. Like some private schools
63. Scientist Tesla and basketball star Jokić
64. General ____ Chicken
65. Stockpiled

Down:

1. Run-___
2. Fair hiring letters
3. Steel city, for short
4. Regional numbers
5. Harp constellation
6. Silent film star with an alliterative name
7. Ques. response
8. Fishy sign
9. Fall flower
10. Prophets
11. Regional org. for nurses
13. Mont Blanc, par exemple
14. Gain back
15. Coin-making
19. What's said to happen when you get lucky (or how 5-down, 8-down, 39-down and 37-down fit into this puzzle)
20. Bleak
21. Before it's too late
22. 20th century German aircraft
24. Kathmandu native
30. Domestically produced
31. Singer Grande
32. Quick visits
33. Fulfilled a purpose
37. Big bear constellation
39. Sign of fall
41. Component of British public broadcasting
45. Lustrous
47. Size of a dumbbell, perhaps
50. French peepers
51. Nickname for the town you're (presumably) solving this puzzle in
52. "Brokeback Mountain" director Lee and several Cambodian kings
54. Card game for three
56. News radio station out of 3-down
58. Rare vision loss condition, abbr.
59. Aged
60. Very 2010s way to refer to your partner
61. The world's new country, abbr.

Scan for answers!



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:
Are you agonizing, Aries? Don't worry, sit with the pain. If it gets to be too much, get yourself a bagel. Embrace this moment.

Taurus:
Bleach your hair, Taurus. Your new bright hair will channel energy from the sun straight through your scalp, giving your brain more energy to get through your midterms. Don't fact-check me on that, just do it.

Gemini:
Are you eating enough, Gemini? Sleeping enough? If you're not, that's fine. Just make sure you're doing one thing right.

Cancer:
It's time to boogie, Cancer. Take up interpretive dance in between your midterms. It'll help you express your feelings about your grades.

Leo:
Is finding time to make coffee and eat breakfast too difficult for you, Leo? Grind up your coffee, breakfast and vitamins into a smoothie. I have never claimed to be a chef, by the way.

Virgo:
Are you stressed, Virgo? Buy a pumpkin and, instead of making a typical jack-o-lantern, smash it with a hammer.

Libra:
Go to the library, Libra. Abandon all of your work and go down a research rabbit hole about alligators and their musical likes and dislikes.

Scorpio:
You need to talk to an old man, Scorpio. You are wise beyond your years, but it's not good enough. Ask the old man riding a bike near your place of residence—or any cyclist—for advice on your midterms.

Sagittarius:
Are you thinking about pulling an all-nighter, Sagittarius? If you are, make sure you don't on a Thursday. If you do, there will be grave consequences. If you don't, there will be great rewards.

Capricorn:
Sleep for 78 hours, Capricorn. When you awake, you will know what to do. Nothing I can say here will help you otherwise.

Aquarius:
NSYNC will be the key to success on your midterms, Aquarius. Listen to their discography voraciously. Memorize it. JT will be watching over you.

Pisces:
Be in your shoegaze era, Pisces. While studying for midterms, listen to Slowdive and be a bit gloomy about it. When you need a break, go outside and stare at the clouds—but definitely keep listening to Slowdive, it'll make you feel better.

The Alabamian

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Julia Maloney speaking at Founders' Day. Photo courtesy of UM's Mass Communication department.

UM celebrates momentum at 127th annual Founders' Day

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

As seniors donned their graduation robes for the first time at Montevallo's 127th Founders' Day on Oct. 12, speakers and honored award recipients focused on the overarching theme of momentum.

University of Montevallo President Dr. John Stewart led the introduction of the Founders' Day convocation. Speaking on the history of the event and the university, Stewart said, "In the late 1800s, as Senator Solomon Bloch of Camden, Ala. traveled the roads of our state, he increasingly witnessed many young women relegated to work in the fields to earn a meager living. There was little opportunity or training for women and Senator Bloch found this intolerable." Collaboration between Bloch and women's education reformer, Julia Tutwiler, was crucial to UM's founding according to Stewart, who said, "Through the cooperation and commitment, a mere hope and an uncertain idea became a reality that has transformed the lives of over 26,000 women and men."

"Today we honor those who laid a firm foundation as we again are together shoulder-to-shoulder 127 years later as a university and greater community," said Stewart.

The theme for the event was momentum, a concept applied to seniors as they move forward in life and the university as it continues to grow.

SGA President Colton Rodano delivered the event's invocation saying, "I expect that some future leaders are here today wearing their senior robes for the first time, fully prepared through their liberal arts education to take on the world."

Following the invocation, senior music major Josh Giles led the singing of the national anthem.

Vice President and Provost Dr. Courtney Bentley and Senior Class President Abigail Heuton led the formal robing of the senior class and recited the class pledge.

The convocation's keynote speaker was UM alumna Julia Maloney. Maloney, who graduated from UM in 2013 with a degree in political science, is now a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Stewart introduced Maloney saying, "In 2013, our Founders' Day speaker was sitting here just like you, wondering what the future may hold."

During her address, Maloney reflected on momentum and the importance of perseverance in the face of difficulties.

For Maloney, momentum brings to mind a boulder rolling down a mountain, steadily picking up speed as it goes. Continuing this analogy, Maloney said, "When I think back to how my life has gone so far that's not quite how it's played out. Sure, there is this great mountain and there is a boulder, and the boulder is making its way down, but that mountain is not smooth. It's full of bumps and cliffs and holes, because you know life is not just success, it's also failure."

"At some point, you will do your best, you will try your hardest, you will give it your all and it won't be enough. You will lose. You will be passed over. You may be turned down and it will hurt a lot, but don't let that deter you," Maloney said. Maloney reflected on her time at UM, discussing her sense of defeat when her side lost College Night her senior year and her feelings of victory after a wind ensemble performance that same year.

"Standing here today I can tell you all, you will know defeat, but you will know success. And today is a success," Maloney said. "Whatever lays ahead of you, please remember it doesn't matter if you win or lose, what matters is what you do next and wherever you may go—wherever that momentum may carry you—please remember Montevallo will always be here for you." Stewart awarded Maloney the UM President's Award following her address and introduced a performance by the university concert choir in her honor.

Following the choir performance, Stewart announced that later that day UM would be launching a fundraising campaign entitled MomentUM. According to Stewart, the funds from this campaign will provide scholarships for students. Additionally, funds will be used to expand financial and material resources and opportunities and services provided by the university.

"The campaign for the University of Montevallo will help not only students who are currently here but faculty who teach you in the classroom," said Stewart.

In another portion of the convocation ceremony, faculty and staff members who had received awards and honors were recognized.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Dr. Ruth Truss presented psychology professor Dr. Elizabeth Richardson as the 2023 University Scholar.

Richardson, whose field is medical clinical psychology, focuses her research on the biological, psychological and social mechanisms of pain.

According to Truss, during Richardson's five years at UM, she has published six peer-reviewed articles, four book chapters and co-authored "Pain Psychology for Clinicians: A Practical Guide for the Non-Psychologist Managing Patients with Chronic Pain," published by Oxford University Press.
Faculty Senate President Dr. Catherine Walsh presented environmental studies professor Dr. Susan Caplow with the Jermaine B. Mitchell Faculty Service Award.

Caplow serves as the Faculty Senate Sustainability Committee Chair and, according to Walsh, was given the award for her dedication to nurturing the environmental studies program and fostering cross-disciplinary connections between faculty and students.

Bentley awarded Dr. Lynn Kirkland of the College of Education and Human Development with the Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award.
Staff Senate President Aaron Mahaney presented the inaugural Johnny D. Holsombeck Shine Award posthumously to Holsombeck.
"The purpose of this award is to recognize a University of Mon-

Continue reading this article on page 3.

UM launches MomentUM with the Alan and Lindsey Song Center of the Arts

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

The University of Montevallo launched MomentUM by dedicating the Center of the Arts building to Alan and Lindsey Song. The dedication ceremony took place on Oct. 12 on UM's 127th Founders Day.

MomentUM is a campaign started by the university to raise money for student scholarships, campus upkeep and investing in new technology for students, faculty and staff. MomentUM aims to raise $30 million, with $26 million already raised by the time of its public launch.

The campaign priorities detailed by the university are student access, affordability and success, academic program support and capital project support.

Alan and Lindsey Song were the keynote speakers at the 2023 Spring Commencement. There, they shared their respect for the University of Montevallo's high quality of academics. They also pledged to donate $1 million to the MomentUM campaign.

Lindsey Song is a 2006 graduate of the University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Arts degree. While attending UM, she served as philanthropy chair for the sorority Phi Mu. Lindsey Song continued her passion for art by painting and creating pottery in her studio.

Alan Song came to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam. He is a graduate of Duke University. Alan Song is the co-founder and chief technology officer for Precision Microbiology and Double Helix Specialists. He also served as former vice president of Assurance Scientific Laboratories and technical supervisor for Alabama Pain Physicians.

Alan Song helped develop and implement testing for UTIs, respiratory diseases and other diseases across the country. In 2019, Song helped create one of the first COVID-19 PCR tests available.

The dedication started with a ribbon cutting outside the Alan and Lindsey Song Center of the Arts, where university president Dr. John Stewart recognized two Board of Trustees members, Judge Matt Fridy and Cynthia Todd along with "the family of the hour," Alan and Lindsey Song.

The ceremony continued inside, where Stewart and Alan and Lindsey Song spoke about the campaign and their contributions to it.

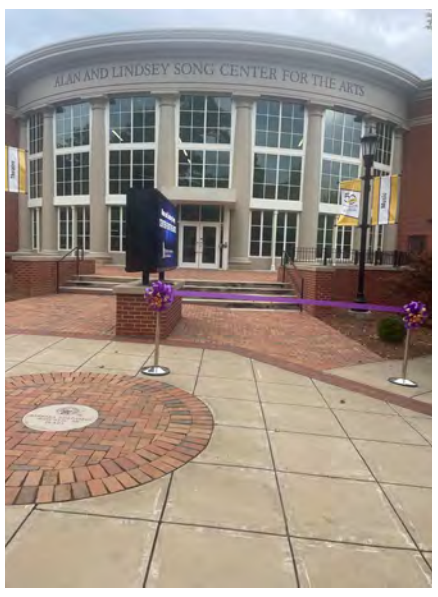
"We ourselves feel what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean," Alan Song said, "but the ocean would be less without the drop."

Song said he hopes this small drop can create ripples that impact the lives of students to come.

Song ended his speech by thanking the University of Montevallo.

"We are definitely where we belong," Song said.

The ceremony ended with Kelli Holmes, Executive Director of Advancement at UM, and Stewart giving the Songs an artist rendering of the Alan and Lindsey Song Center of the Arts.



The Alan and Lindsey Song Center for the Arts. Photo by Kylie Jordan, Social media manager.



Crowds gathered at the ribbon cutting event. Photo by Kylie Jordan, Social media manager.

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Letter from the editor: Senior fear

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Half the fun of Halloween is thinking about the things that make chills run up your spine: ghouls, goblins, spiders, vampires, things that go bump in the night… the impending feeling of doom and dread prompted by your senior year of college?

One of those things is not like the other. One of them is much, much scarier. And I am, assuredly, not having fun thinking about it.

After getting through a hectic midterms week, I was hit with a sudden realization: I'm now more than a quarter of the way through my last year of college. That realization terrified me more than just about anything else could. Life as I know it is terrifyingly close to ending.

More than anything, this is an identity crisis of sorts. Sure, there are other worries and anxieties tied up in this—I mean, there's the whole matter of seeking employment, ideally receiving a halfway decent paycheck and figuring out how graduate school is going to fit into the mix—but at the core lies one question: who am I?

Just like, presumably, many of you reading this, I've been a student practically my whole life. On top of that, I have always, more or less, loved school and being a student. Even before I started school, I loved school. When I complain about schoolwork, my mom always loves to tell me an anecdote of how I cried on my fifth birthday because I had thought that meant I could start kindergarten that same day. She tells me this, not as a way to tell me to stop complaining, but as a reminder of how much I have always loved to learn. A reminder that I'm lucky to have chances to keep furthering my education and doing what I love.

That being said, my devotion to school has been a bit of a double-edged sword. I've not had much of a life outside of being a student and I don't really know who I am without the structure of going to and participating in school. So, when I graduate in May, where does that leave me?

Sometimes it feels like I have the opposite of senioritis. I hear others talking about how ready they are to graduate, to be finished with school, and I can relate to some degree. Being a student can be very stressful a lot of the time, and I'm as ready to be rid of that stress as anyone else. But, mostly, I can't help but feel a deep, growing dread in the pit of my stomach, accompanied by a strong feeling of apprehension. Everyone else seems happy and excited, so why can't I be? What's wrong with me?

It really does feel like, in a way, my life is ending. But does that necessarily have to be a bad thing?

Lately, perhaps as a result of this ongoing crisis, I have been trying to reframe my thinking about endings. What I'm about to write is very cheesy and is in no way groundbreaking, but I've come to the realization that an ending is just a new beginning.

I mean, yes, life as I've known it is going to be over, but I'm not actually dying. I'm 21 years old, I still have my whole life ahead of me, it's barely even begun. To act as if my life is going to end the moment I graduate is, admittedly, a bit overdramatic. Of course, I don't have to know who I am now. I have my whole life to keep figuring that out.

This shift in thinking is applicable to my anxieties about so many of my post-graduation worries. A lot of my anxiety about graduating, identity crisis aside, stems from the fact that I still don't really know what I want to do post-graduation. Don't get me wrong, I have ideas of what I want to do, but that's the problem. I have too many ideas. I feel like I did the opposite of what you're supposed to do during college: I came in with one idea of what I wanted to do after I graduated, and I came out with at least five more. Fantastic.

But the other day, when I was in a particularly good mood and felt a bit more in love with the world than usual, I realized that I had been thinking about this in an unhelpful way, too. Instead of being paralyzed by choice, I should be excited about my potential. My life isn't ending, it's just starting really. And, there are so many new and exciting opportunities I can explore in the future, Isn't that wonderful?

Ultimately, I'm still afraid of graduating. It's not exactly something I'm looking forward to—something I want to spend my time thinking and daydreaming about. But, at the same time, I know that graduating won't kill me. Well, probably won't kill me, at least.

If you're reading this and you feel similarly, I wish I had better—or, really, any—advice to give you. I suppose the best I can offer is a reminder that you are not alone in your feelings and fears. I know it's difficult to feel scared about something that you feel like you should be happy about. But, remember, fear and excitement are not mutually exclusive emotions and experiences. In fact, I think that the most exciting, wonderful things in life are often the scariest as well. Embrace this moment. Feel your feelings. You'll make it through, you're not dead yet.

Why you should choose 'How to Care for a Human Girl'

Warning: contains spoilers from the novel

By JAYDEN PRESLEY.

Let's discuss abortion. Always a fabulous conversation starter, that one, a litmus test of sorts to find out who your true friends are. Both sides can agree with that, at least. I can see pro-choicers and pro-lifers now, crossing their arms and nodding righteously to that statement. Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June 2022, the decision is still fresh on the public's mind. It is certainly still on my mind after reading Montevallo professor Dr. Ashley Wurzbacher's novel "How to Care for a Human Girl."

Wurzbacher teaches English and creative writing at the University of Montevallo. She has mentored me and many other students taking the creative writing minor, pushing us to shape our fiction writing to the best version it can possibly be. In my classes with her, she shared an excerpt from her then unpublished manuscript, and I am familiar with her battle over the final book cover. Through her experience, I had the privilege of seeing a fraction of the publishing process before "How to Care for a Human Girl" was released on Aug. 8. Boy, was this the perfect time for it to hit bookstores.

Let's go back to 2016 and 2018, the timeframe of the story, set before Roe v. Wade's overruling. Two sisters from rural Pennsylvania, Jada and Maddy Battle, find themselves facing a frightening situation at the same time: pregnancy. Jada is a 31-year-old psychology Ph.D student living in Pittsburgh with a shaky marriage, who quietly has an abortion without telling her husband. 19-year-old Maddy cares for birds at a wildlife rehabilitation center back home in Pennsylvania. The man who got her pregnant gives her $4,000 to have an abortion, but Maddy is unsure that she wants to. Though they are estranged, Maddy goes to her sister for support, and the two begin to rely on each other once more as they wade through guilt and past resentments.

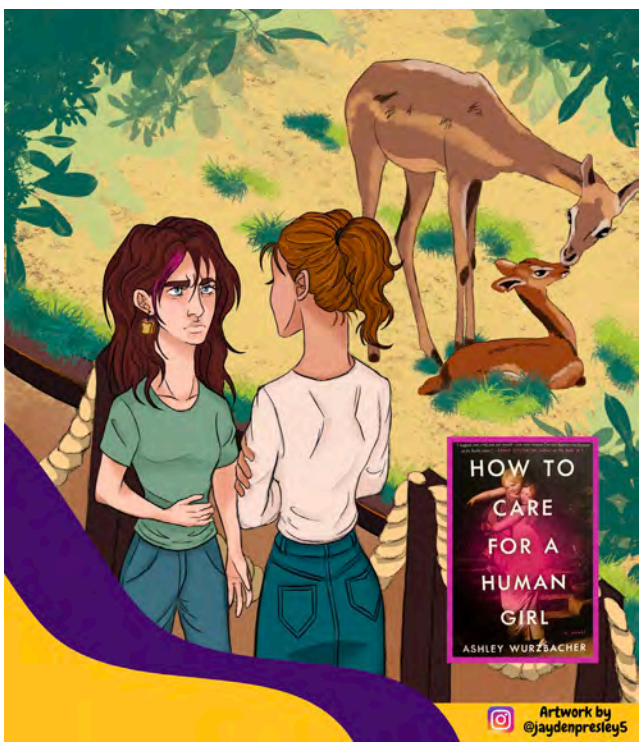
Do not read this book if you are searching to reaffirm your political views. Wurzbacher does not ignore the societal, familial and political guilt that both sisters face as they navigate their circumstances. It is saturated in their lives at the moment of conception.

However, Wurzbacher does force the reader, as if jerking you by the chin and keeping your eyes upon it, to pay attention to the humanity of Jada and Maddy. They are people. They are women who face many, many people telling them what their choice should be.

I want to go back to the word guilt. Early in the novel from Maddy's perspective, her character reflects, "Everybody always pretended they wouldn't judge you, but they did so assuming you'd come around to their point of view, assuming you'd choose correctly."

The story is a deep exploration of both Battle sisters' torrid emotions of guilt and shame. Maddy feels it for being pregnant in the first place and having a desire to keep the child. Jada feels it for going through with the abortion and not telling her husband. While in Jada's perspective, she comes to the conclusion that her husband will not understand why she did it. The novel reads, "If you spent five minutes inside my brain, she wanted to say – to him to then picketers, to the whole world, with their opinions – if you could crack the door to my head and hear all this noise, you'd shut up."

The book has no stance on abortion. Instead, it tackles a truth even harder to grasp – a reminder that we do not know what we will do in a pregnancy situation until it happens to someone we care for. Or, until you are the one who is.



Sisters Maddy (left) and Jada (right) discuss their pregnancies at a museum. Illustration by Jayden Presley.

Many authors will use their characters as conduits in heavy-handed attempts to insert a stance on abortion. Wurzbacher makes a refreshing decision to place emphasis on the experience of two very different women who got pregnant under very different circumstances. The strong characterization of Jada and Maddy immerses the reader into their situations as if they are real people.

There were many moments I forgot about the politics. Jada's acceptance of her childhood hometown and the successful person she is now is brilliantly juxtaposed with Maddy's dissatisfaction with her hometown and desire to be more than she is. Though Jada chooses to have an abortion, I love the very real conflict she has within herself. She never imagined she would be placed in the situation to choose, thinking about how she "had held signs bearing the slogan before…and she realized that until now the 'my' in MY BODY, MY CHOICE had seemed not truly to apply to her but only to other women. She had thought that she could be smart enough, careful enough, impermeable enough not to need the rights she marched for."

It is easy to sympathize with both sisters and their difficult situations. Their pregnancies only scratch the surface of their lives, whether it be strained relationships with men or navigating the grief of losing their mother. The sisters need each other more than ever and must reconcile, a crucial plot point that I hope readers never lose sight of.

One of the core themes of the story is the power our choices have over our lives. After facing a difficult decision, we often wonder what would have happened if we had chosen differently. "How to Care for a Human Girl" reminds us that, despite what anyone else says or thinks, we are the ones who must make peace with the choices we are privileged to make – and think about the choices we are not allowed to have.

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Glow in the Dark Yoga: A fun way to relax after midterms

By KENDALL MURRAY.

The University of Montevallo's Exercise Science Club hosted a Glow in the Dark Yoga event in collaboration with Moyo Fest on Oct. 25 at Myrick Gym.

President of the Exercise Science Club, Laura Jones, said she was excited to offer this unique experience to students, faculty and staff.

After the semester began, she knew she wanted the Exercise Science Club to collaborate with Moyo Fest.

"When I got together with Dr. Herron, Diane Lander, and Georgia Mrachek we were brainstorming and came up with glow-in-the-dark yoga. This is something Moyo Fest has done in the past before COVID and we all thought it was the perfect idea to bring it back," said Jones.

According to Jones, glow-in-the-dark yoga is different from regular yoga because it takes place in a low-lit environment that helps to reduce anxiety participants may feel about doing yoga in front of others.

To ensure the safety of everyone involved, all participants from outside of the university signed a waiver to participate, but the event was open to students, faculty, staff and community members.

Jones explained that GloYo is a great way to destress and take a break from the stress of midterms. It is a unique way to practice yoga and socialize while having fun in a relaxing environment.

"I think that GloYo differs from regular yoga simply because of the glow aspect. Anyone that's nervous to do yoga in front of others may not have to worry about that because we'll be in a very low-lit area. You don't hear of glow-in-the-dark yoga every day and I think it will be a fun experience for anyone that attends," said Jones.

Jones says that GloYo is a great way to bring people together in a safe and fun way and ist at a perfect time after midterms.

"I think this can be a very relaxing event for people to take an hour out of their day and just unwind. With yoga, you're able to leave your busy life at the door, focus on yourself, and have some fun."

Jones hopes that GloYo will become an annual event that students can look forward to.

Council approves Orr Park improvements at busy meeting

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

The Montevallo City Council had a busy meeting on Oct. 23, holding a public hearing as well as voting on seven measures.

Two of the seven measures the council voted on related to infrastructure improvements at Orr Park. The council voted unanimously in favor of the Montevallo Development Cooperative District using some of its funds to construct new restrooms at the park as well as make repairs to the park's pavilion and gazebo.

To help finance these projects, MDCD is applying for two Shelby County Parks and Recreation Grants. If received, these grants would cover half of the costs for each project. This means that MDCD would only have to spend $85,000 on the restroom project—estimated to cost a total of $170,000—and $9,500 on the pavilion and gazebo repair project—estimated to cost a total of $19,000.

Another measure the council voted on pertained to the Montevallo African American Heritage Trail. The council unanimously approved two new historic markers for the trail. These markers will be placed at the Mason Hall located on Commerce Street and at the Little School in Jacksonville—a schoolhouse located in what used to be the predominantly Black neighborhood of Jacksonville—located on Island Street.

After some brief discussion, the council voted to opt into a state-backed initiative giving a one-time $600 payment to any former city employee who retired prior to March 2022. These payments will cost the city $5,020.

Discussion about this measure centered around where funds for these payments would come from. The funds were set to be derived from the city's American Rescue Plan funds, which council member Sonya Swords questioned.

"If we keep taking out of ARPA, then we don't have our funds for big projects," Swords said.

City clerk Steve Gilbert responded by saying that the city had decided to pull funds from the ARPA account because they had used that account to fund similar measures before. He pointed out that these funds could be derived from the city's general budget, however, and that the council just needed to indicate which account they would like to draw from when they voted.

Ultimately, the council did not make any changes to the source for the funds and voted unanimously in favor of the payments.

Revisiting a topic from last meeting, the council voted unanimously to grant Yellowhammer Networks, LLC the right to construct, maintain and operate a fiber optic network within Montevallo city limits in order to provide internet and related services to Montevallo residents. At its previous meeting, the council was visited by Yellowhammer Networks' CEO, George Henry.

In addition to voting on these measures, the council held a public hearing relating to a petition to annex a six-acre parcel of land located on Spring Creek Road into Montevallo city limits.

Gilbert pointed out that there are two pieces of property on either side of this parcel that are already incorporated into the city, "and this one is kind of sandwiched in the middle and not incorporated."

The landowner was not present at the meeting to discuss annexation. No one present at the meeting voiced any objection to incorporation either.

The city will vote on incorporating the land at their next meeting.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Nov. 13, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.

Raging falcons smash their worries away

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

On Oct. 17, a mobile rage room visited the University of Montevallo to allow Falcons the opportunity to de-stress after the completion of their midterms. The event was hosted on the patio of Farmer Hall by the University Program Council in partnership with Counseling Services.

The event also featured a donation drive for the Falcon Food Pantry which gave donors a chance to win prizes as well.

At the event, students were able to write down thoughts or things that were causing them stress, such as midterms, on glass plates. After signing a waiver and applying a face shield, students were then able to throw their plate inside of a covered tent, thereby smashing their worries away.

Ivey Siegel, Coordinator of UM's UPC, said, "We had talked about something like a rage room because we wanted to partner with Counseling Services. So, we felt like that was a good stress relief, especially because we decided to do it right around midterms."

While at the event, raging Falcons shared their motivations for smashing their plates. Some students were stressed by their jobs, some by their classes and some weren't stressed at all.

Siegel agreed that her midterms were stressing her out while UPC member Kaitie Wayne acknowledged that her pet kitten was peeing in inappropriate places, which she wrote down on her plate.

Theatre major Leigh Michael Cannon said, "I didn't realize that they were going to have the option to write down stuff that you dislike on the plate and then smash it, and I really enjoy that idea of kind of putting all of your anxieties or insecurities or stressors on a plate then destroying it. Destroying your anxieties, destroying your stressors. It's really cool! It felt good!"

Theatre major Cailyn Hill said, "I've had a lot of things going on in my brain and I wanted to get them out and throw them on the ground, because it's been rough."

Elementary education major Nae McNeil said, "I used to work at Pita Pit not too long ago and I burnt my hand and I was very angry about it. And, I recently quit because I hated it there."

Speech-language pathology major Sage Lage said, "Honestly, I'm not really mad about that much. I don't really hold grudges. But, like, it was fun just getting to write about my neurological disorder on a plate and I just–I'm not mad about it, I just wanted to smash a plate, for funsies."

They added, "My plate didn't even break."

Overall, the event was a smashing success. While the mobile rage room event was the first of its kind at UM, Siegel said that she would be open to hosting the event again if there was enough support.

"I would love to see it be a recurring event. I think it typically just depends on how our students respond and how my members respond but I feel that since all of my members jumped in front of the line, it may be something they want to do again," she said.

Founders' Day cont.

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

"The purpose of this award is to recognize a University of Montevallo staff member's dedication and service to the university students, colleagues and citizens of the greater community," said Mahaney. "If you had the honor of knowing Johnny and if you spent any time with him while he was out grilling at an athletic event, or volunteering in the community with the Boys and Girls Club or the City of Montevallo Parks and Rec Board, or even if he took a moment to brighten your day, you would agree that that statement is who he was."

UM National Alumni Association President Stephanie Baugh Shaw awarded Director of University Marketing and Communications Kira Thomas with the Outstanding Staff Service Award, social work professor Dr. Jason Newell the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award and Dr. Susan Vaughn the Mary Lou Elder Williams Alumna Loyalty Award.

Baugh Shaw also announced that recipients of the Alumni Association 15 Within 15, an honor given to 15 alumni who demonstrate strong leadership and career passion within the first 15 years after graduation, would be honored at a dinner later that day. Baugh Shaw asked members of the 2023 class of the 15 Within 15 which includes Maloney to stand and be honored.

Stewart honored the 2023 finders of the crook Rachel Johnson, Cole Swain and Lucy Frost-Helms saying, "True Montevallo sleuths, congratulations to each of you, our Sherlock Holmes."

Stewart also honored UM Board of Trustees members including board chairman Justice Todd Strange, as well as Cynthia Todd, Judge Matt Fridy and Anita Brueck, asking them to stand and be honored.

Also asked to stand by Stewart were Dr. Donna Ploessl, Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, Dr. Amiee Mellon, Dean of the Michael E. Stephens College of Business, Dr. Steven Peters, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Academic Grand Marshall Dr. Robert Barone.

Stewart asked those representing the City of Montevallo and Shelby County, the UM National Alumni Association, UM Junior Board, UM Foundation board, 1896 Society, military members and veterans and alumni to stand and be honored alongside several family members and friends of those presented with awards during convocation.

Convocation ended with a performance of the UM Alma Mater led by Giles and a Benediction by Student Trustee Aubrie Chastain.



‘It’s a breath of fresh air’: Montevallo men’s basketball looks to make noise in the Gulf South Conference with a brand new team

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.

Montevallo’s Men’s Basketball team is back on the court, beginning their first official week of practice on Oct. 9. The Falcons are going into this season with, essentially, a brand new team, and they’re looking to put the GSC on notice.

In the 2022-23 season, the Falcons went 10-18 overall and 8-16 in conference play. Since then, the team has lost big names like Braxton Bertolette, who led the GSC last year in scoring, averaging 22 points per game, and Tyler Moore, last year’s GSC Freshman of the Year.

UM is only returning three players from last year’s roster: redshirt-junior and graduate student Mason Shiflett, senior Christian Fortner and junior Aidan Gardiner.

The 12 new Falcons are a medley of both transfers and freshmen brought in by head coach Anthony Komara. This is Komara’s second year at the helm of the Falcons men’s basketball program, and his first recruiting class.

“We’ve got a really good freshman class,” said Shiflett of the five newcomers, “they’re young, they’re excited to be here, they’re willing to learn.”

Shiflett also spoke highly of the team’s seven transfers, specifically mentioning sophomore Jaylen Curry and juniors Justin Graham and Charlie Champagne.

The squad was excited to get back on the court. Every player on the roster is focused on winning, which is something that Shiflett hasn’t yet experienced with this program.

“There’s been a lot of setbacks and drawbacks the last couple years since I’ve been here, and it finally feels like that’s behind us,” said Shiflett.

Shiflett also believes that this team is more of a unit than it has been in the past. Even though most of the team had not met each other before returning to campus, there’s already lots of cohesion within the group.

“It’s been a breath of fresh air,” said Shiflett, “it feels like we’re all finally on the same team and we’re moving forward.”

The Falcons will open their season against the defending Division II National Champions, Nova Southeastern University, on Nov. 10 in the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Conference Challenge Tournament.

The Falcons will travel to Birmingham later in the season to play in a big matchup on Dec. 17 against UAB. The Blazers were a solid team last year, losing to Florida Atlantic University in the Conference USA Championship, but Shiflett is confident in the team’s abilities, even though they’re facing a Division I opponent.



Montevallo’s Men’s Basketball team. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

“I wanna go up there and I wanna make a statement to the country that we’re here, and we’re for real,” said Shiflett.

Shiflett is calling other UM students to support the men’s basketball team at their home games.

“We could have one of the best home court advantages in the country, and we have a beautiful arena, and I’d love to see it full, and we’ve got guys that deserve to have it full,” he said.

Shiflett has seen all of the pieces come together during preseason and knows that this team will be tough to beat once games get underway, saying “Everybody’s got something to prove. Everybody’s been doubted, and I mean, we’re gonna be really good.”





Montevallo basketball player Mason Shiflett. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

Coming up in UM Athletics...

- Men’s golf goes on the road, competing in the Citrus Intercollegiate Tournament at the Champions Gate National Golf Club in Orlando, Fla. on Oct. 30 and 31.
- The volleyball team will face off against Shorter University in a Halloween home game. The Falcons bested the Hawks at their last meetup on Sept. 26—winning 3-2. Gameplay starts at 6 p.m. Following this, the team will have a series of away games at UAH on Nov. 3, University of West Georgia on Nov. 10 and Valdosta State on Nov. 11.
- Women’s basketball will play an exhibition game at Jacksonville State University on Nov. 1 ahead of their Nov. 10 season start at the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Here, the Falcons will compete against Embry-Riddle University, before facing Nova Southereastern University on Nov. 11.
- Men’s and women’s swimming will compete against Birmingham-Southern on Nov. 4 before racing again later in the week against University of West Florida. Competition starts at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. respectively at Montevallo’s Natatorium.
- Men’s basketball kicks off their season competing in Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic in Miami Shores, Fla. on Nov. 10. For their first match, the Falcons will take on Nova Southeastern University. The next day, the team will compete again against Barry University.

Crook finders score threepeat victory

By CARTER BIBB.



Cole Swain, Rachel Johnson and Lucy Frost-Helms with the Crook on Founders' Day. Photo courtesy of Frost-Helms.

Winning the Crook hunt for the third year in a row, junior speech-language pathology major Rachel Johnson, senior social science major Lucy Frost-Helms and junior mathematics major Cole Swain sat down to talk about the history of the tradition, their experience with the Crook, the strategies they used to find it and why you should care about some wooden stick in the first place.

The annual hunt for the Crook takes place during the week leading up to Founders' Day. The Crook hunt is a Montevallo tradition with a history stretching back more than a century, when Montevallo was still called Alabama College and an all-girls school. But, since the 1920s, the tradition has changed significantly.

The modern Crook hunt involves the crook being hidden somewhere on campus. Students are given until Founders' Day to find it as they are given hints, usually in the form of riddles, each day until the Crook is found. The Crook can be hidden anywhere on campus. The student who finds the crook gets to carve their name on the surface.

Originally, the senior class hid the Crook. Juniors were then tasked with finding the stick. Over the years, several things have changed regarding the tradition. Now, all students participate instead of only the juniors and seniors. In the 90s, the hiding of the crook was transferred over to the purview of university administration.

There are also two crooks: the one we use now, and the original one from the 1920s.

The finding of the crook has been a mainstay in UM's culture for over a century and the student body has poured love right back into the tradition. Johnson, Frost-Helms and Swain are excellent examples of this love. This marks the third year in a row that the trio have found the crook.

The trio's win streak began in Johnson and Swain's freshman year, when they and Frost-Helms found the Crook outside of Reynolds Hall.

"We found it […] directly outside of Tiffany Bunt's office, and she's the director of Alumni Affairs and right inside that window is the old crook […] and the clue hinted towards the crook being near the original," Johnson explained.

The next year, they used the clue to find the crook hidden outside the Center for the Arts. The clue that was given by administration was: "What do these people all have in common: David Morgan, Shirley and Jesse Jackson, O.J Carson, Ruben Triplett, Blake Hudson, and the best administrative assistant anywhere?"

The average person would likely find this clue to be largely incomprehensible, but the trio put together the location before lunchtime was over. They deduced that the crook was hidden near the Center for the Arts, which was formerly the site of Jeter Hall—the location the clue was alluding to.

This year, knowledge of Montevallo's history was needed to decipher the clue. It read, "In the old one, you could hang up your wings, but in the new one, Falcons soared," a reference to the fact that Old Gym used to be an airplane hangar.

Frost-Helms said that, after solving the clue, the group discovered the Crook in steps on a staircase in Myrick.

Evidenced by their prodigious winning streak, these three students are nearly experts at this tradition.

"We pay attention, we know what day the clue is going to be released on; it's going to be released the Monday before Founders Day," said Johnson.

Another important part of their strategy: running, splitting up and, if necessary, maybe skipping a few classes.

What really gives them such a leg up on the competition is their ability to quickly interpret the clues.

"Read a lot. Be invested in Montevallo history. Ask questions to professors you look up to that might have knowledge about the campus, a lot of professors are alumni and they know things that you don't," said Johnson. "I think the thing that drew us to the crook was Montevallo history, we had that first."

This, in their opinion, is what makes this tradition truly special. The competition, the running, the fact that Johnson, Frost-Helms and Swain walked and ran over seven miles in this year's hunt can all be attributed to the joy of being connected to the history of the university. What better way to show your love for this place than turning it upside-down trying to look for a century old stick?

ADPi hosts runway event to raise money for Ronald McDonald House

By KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager.

UM's Alpha Delta Pi sorority hosted the RMHC Runway to raise money supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities on Oct. 17. This event was held on the Farmer Hall stage with other sororities and fraternities in attendance.

Five contestants competed against each other through a runway walk in various costumes. The contestants were judged by a panel of three UM faculty members. Bo Ferguson of Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternity, dressed as Princess Diana, and Mary Lynn Jefferys of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority, dressed as a cowboy, were the winners of the contest.

The funds from this event directly impact the greater Birmingham area, said Bridget McCurrach, ADPi's Philanthropy Chair. ADPi donates directly to the Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham. This is the house ADPi volunteers at and where ADPi alumni work, so McCurrach said the sorority has been able to form a connection there.

McCurrach explained the Ronald McDonald House provides "room and board, food and basic necessities to families who have children in the hospital." McCurrach said this minimizes travel to and from the hospital, as the Birmingham Ronald McDonald house is across the street from Children's of Alabama hospital.

The runway was planned as ADPi's philanthropy this semester because McCurrach wanted to do something creative.

"We try to keep up with the Run for Ronald tradition and looked for a play on words and came up with that," McCurrach said. "People love dressing up and our campus has so many outfits and personalities."

One winner, Bo Ferguson, said he participated in the philanthropy event because he wanted to support the sisters of ADPi.

"Participating in philanthropies means supporting charities, which to me is the main reason of Greek Life. Growing not only yourself, but your community," Ferguson said.

Have questions about advising? Read tips on the dos and don'ts of advising season online. Scan the QR code.



The winners of the runway competition, Bo Ferguson, dressed as Princess Diana, and Mary Lynn Jefferys, dressed as a cowboy. Photo by Kylie Jordan, Social media manager.



Promotional material for "Killers of the Flower Moon."

'Killers of the Flower Moon': Masterpiece of an aging artist

By CARTER JAMES.

To call this film powerful would be an insult. Afflicting is apt.

I'm ashamed to say I was excited to see "Killers of the Flower Moon", because that feels reductive of what this is trying to achieve. Naturally, a filmmaker as revered as Martin Scorsese and actors as prolific as Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro will spike my interest. They're some of the best for a reason. However, being excited for a film for those reasons, inherently devalues its importance.

Scorsese isn't interested in being a flashy auteur or making the year's big hit. He's in the twilight of his career and life, and his art reflects that. "Killers of the Flower Moon" may have been marketed as a big historical epic, but in reality, it's a thorough examination of white greed.

The film is about the Osage Native American murders of Fairfax, Oka. that took place from the late 1910s until the early 1930s. Though indigenous actors were cast and involved in the process of the film, it is from the perspective of the main arbiters of the atrocities. I don't see this as a detriment to the film, as Scorsese uses this perspective as a condemnation of the killers, letting our empathy for the Osage be inherent. That being said, there is room for the Osage to have more involvement in the story.

It isn't unusual for Scorsese to have the protagonist of his films portrayed as terrible people, but it's different for him to view them through an objective lens. This isn't your typical crime film such as "Goodfellas," and Scorsese makes sure of that. The mobsters of "Goodfellas" lived life through rose-tinted glasses, never stopping to think about how their crime affects their victims. In "Killers of the Flower Moon," the crime is deeply personal- a crime of murder and racism. What's horrifying is the normalcy of the characters' actions. For as horrific and disturbing the film can be at times, it's mostly quiet. Life changing decisions are made in casual conversations between family members. One moment, characters will have dinner and hug each other. The next moment, they pull each other aside and plan which family member will be killed off next. The true evil of these crimes comes not from the hate that facilitates our main character's hearts, but from the guise of love.

This articles continues on our website. Scan the QR code to continue reading.

The ghost of King House

By NETHAN CREW.

King House, one of campus's oldest buildings, is said to be inhabited by the ghost of its namesake, Edmund King.

There are conflicting viewpoints on how King died. Some say that he died in 1863 when he was 82 years old from health issues. Others claim that he died by getting hit by a tree limb while walking through his orchard. He often walked between the fruit trees, tending to them and occasionally walking to the nearby family cemetery to visit his deceased wife and son's graves.

Even in death, King is rumored to continue his orchard walks, with many claiming to see the shadowy presence of a man with lantern and shovel in hand lurking around King House at night. Rumor has it, King buried gold coins around his property during the Civil War to hide them from Union soldiers.

Others have reported seeing a figure in the dimly lit windows of the house's upper floor, opening curtains and smiling at passer-bys. This figure is often accompanied by faint footsteps coming from the bedroom that King spent much of his later years in or the sound of jingling coins, allegedly the sound of King counting his fortune.

All attempts to catch the ghost of Edmund King have been unsuccessful, with those who have stayed in the house reporting that the sounds vanish as soon as one comes to the door of the bedroom.

There have also been reports of spectral bobbing lights around the headstones of the various King family members in the cemetery, including his first wife, Nancy Ragan King, who died in 1842 and his second wife, Susan D. King, who died in 1850.

Several of King's children also lay in the cemetery, many of whom had tragic and untimely deaths. This includes Lylleton King, who was buried in 1848 after a hunting accident where he was shot and killed by his brother Nathaniel. Nathaniel later died of tuberculosis in 1863.

A few of King's grandsons were also buried in the family cemetery, following untimely deaths in the Civil War. Eli Shortridge was killed in the Battle of Seven Pines at the young age of 18, and Frank Forrester Shortridge was only 19 when he found his demise during the Battle of Atlanta. King's other grandson, George D. Shortridge, Jr. lost a leg in the war, returned home to Montevallo and, shortly thereafter, passed in 1868.

While signs of the paranormal are debatable, many of the stories about his ghost ring true to King's life. The King family was extremely wealthy, with a house fashioned with glass pane windows and an orchard to exude this wealth. The house, after King's passing, was used as a Yankee troop headquarters, making it unlikely that King buried gold coins to hide from their seizure.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.



King House. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

The whitewashing of King House: A disclaimer

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

The story of the ghost of Edmund King is certainly a Montevallo tradition, but it also works to gentrify and whitewash the history of King House.

King was a settler in Central Alabama, moving to the area after the Treaty of Fort Jackson ended the Creek War in 1814 and opened the land for white settlement. The Montevallo-area land that King settled in 1817 was historically the land of the Muscogee people. By the time that King moved into the area, Muscogee people still lived on the land and were viewed as allies to the white settlers. However, this sense of allyship did not stop the Muscogee people from being forcibly displaced from the land in the 1830s with the Trail of Tears.

King House was constructed in 1823 through the forced labor of enslaved people. Slave labor was the backbone of the King family's economic success, as King began a plantation operation in Montevallo. King profited off of agricultural work, mining, metalwork and a grist mill operation, all powered by slave labor. According to the 1820 Census, King held at least 16 slaves.

The economic success King derived from forced labor granted him the ability to donate land to several projects in the area. This included the construction of Reynolds Hall, which King donated the land for in 1851. The construction work done to build Reynolds was also likely performed by enslaved people. King died in 1863, and was buried in the family cemetery lot now located behind Harman Hall and Hill House alongside several of his family members. However, it remains unclear where the slaves King held are buried. While burial customs of the time indicate that their bodies may lie at the perimeter of the King family's cemetery lot, this has not been confirmed. Parts of Montevallo's campus may lie on top of the graves of people who were once enslaved here.

The ghost of Reynolds Hall

By M.K. BRYANT.

Reynolds Hall is a staple piece of the University of Montevallo's campus. Built in 1851 for the purpose of housing a private all-boys school, it eventually became one of the first educational buildings for the Alabama Girls Industrial School in 1896. Named for the university's first president, Captain Henry Clay Reynolds, Reynolds Hall is known for its four white columns, winding staircases and—most notably—its haunted history.

Outside of education, the history of Reynolds Hall is widely debated. During the Civil War, around three decades before the Alabama Girls Industrial School was founded, Captain Reynolds was allegedly responsible for guarding the building from Union soldiers. Other historical documents, however, would put Captain Reynolds in Virginia during this period of time. Another popular rumor is that Reynolds Hall served as a hospital during the Civil War. This claim, however, is baseless, and presumed to be false.

One thing that the university community agrees on, however, is the idea that Captain Reynolds haunts the building to this day.

Campus maintenance staff have claimed that Captain Reynolds frequently moves his portrait around to different locations in the building, and countless students have reported seeing the blue, glowing figure of Captain Reynolds himself.
Those who believe the rumor of Reynolds being the location of a Civil War hospital, where Captain Reynold's soldiers were eventually massacred during his absence, say that his spirit lingers in the building out of guilt for letting his men be killed.

The general, and likely more accurate, consensus is that Captain Reynolds haunts the building out of discontent from being asked to step down from his position in 1899.
The building was not named after him until decades later in 1925. Reynolds Hall has served many purposes throughout the years—from the campus chapel to the home of the university's theatre department, the alumni affairs and admissions offices and now, the esports team. With his namesake building being this active, it's no wonder that Captain Reynolds' spirit remains so restless.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

The ghost of Palmer Hall

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Have you ever tried to predict the winner of College Night before Sweet Saturday? Many have over the years, but there is supposedly one individual who gets it right every single time, and he just so happens to be a ghost.

Dr. W. H. Trumbauer, one of the primary designers of Palmer Hall, where College Night is held each year, is said to harmlessly haunt the halls he helped build. Trumbauer, or "Trummy," as he is known, was a strong supporter of the theatre department at UM and the arts in general. He still holds a strong connection to College Night, even now.

Trummy taught within the theatre department at UM from 1926-57, and was highly superstitious. He had always been a predictor, planning extra dramatic performances around his predictions of severe weather, but never on a full or new moon. The story of Trummy's haunting goes that, even though he was one of the primary designers of Palmer Hall, his name was left out of the engraved cornerstone of the building. This action supposedly ignited his presence as a ghost in Palmer.

Trummy walks the halls of Palmer, sees to the preparation of shows backstage and most importantly, predicts the outcome of College Night each year. It is said that during the final dress rehearsal of College Night, Trummy decides which show he likes most and proceeds to swing the wooden battens over the stage, swinging either towards the Purple Side seating or Gold Side seating in the auditorium. Trummy's favorite show during the final dress rehearsal is said to be who will win that particular College Night's season.

Trummy is an interesting ghost because, not only is he harmless, but he clearly likes to have fun in the afterlife. Some witnesses have said they've seen Trummy having a little fun in Palmer. Some say they've seen a shadow walk by in the dressing room mirrors. Others have claimed to have heard a strange voice who whistles to the sound of music already playing. Other signs of Trummy include unlocked doors that won't open and even costumes appearing to have someone in them.

Clearly, Trummy remains an important supernatural fixture at UM, and, at this point, he essentially owns Palmer Hall. So, when next year's College Night show rolls around, look for signs of Trummy. His bet may be better than yours.



Promotional material for "Halloween is Grinch Night."



Promotional material for "Halloweentown."

The ghost of Condie Cunningham

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Picture this: you're a student at Alabama Girls' Industrial School in 1908 living in Main Hall. You're up late with your roommate one February night making hot chocolate over a chafing dish when the nightly curfew bell rings, marking that it's time for you to be back in your room and fast asleep. You and your roommate rush to clean up your supplies, but in your haste, you spill the alcohol fuel for the chafing dish on your nightgown which then catches flame.

You begin to panic along with your roommate. Screaming, you draw the attention of other students as the flames begin to eat away at your nightgown. A few come to your aid, trying to put the fire out with a rug, but it's no use. You continue to panic, running down the halls—not thinking, just trying to get away from the flames that are now consuming your skin, your whole body.

Eventually, the flames get extinguished and you're taken to the infirmary. But it's no use, you've been too severely burned, and you die from your injuries two days later.

This was the fate of Condie Cunningham, a figure whose name precedes her in Montevallo lore. More than 100 years later, Montevallo students are still talking about her screams which are said to still echo through Main's halls.

But screams can be written off, right? It could be someone outside being too loud. It could be a trick of the imagination—paranoia tinting your perceptions. What's harder to write off is the image of a woman's face, engulfed in flames, appearing in the wood grain of the door to what used to be Condie's room. Try as you might to ignore it, you can't escape Condie's eyes, staring out lifelessly from the door—forever stuck in the limbo of her final, horrific moments.

Residents of Main, already unnerved, became further offput by the image in the door, prompting the university to replace it. But, even after the door was replaced, Condie remained—appearing again and again as the door was replaced several more times.

Eventually, the door was removed entirely and Condie's room was sealed off, perhaps in hopes that sealing the room would seal her spirit off from the living realm as well.

Classic horror to Dr. Seuss: Halloween recommended viewing

By SAM COST, Business manager; KYLIE JORDAN, Social media manager; LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor; and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Halloween is, arguably, one of the best movie-watching holidays. From classic horror movies to made-for-tv specials, there's something for everyone. Here are the movies The Alabamian's editorial staff will be watching this Halloween.

"Halloween Is Grinch Night"
By Sam Cost

I had the pleasure or maybe horror of viewing a short film called "Halloween Is Grinch Night." A prequel to "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" this movie basically runs with the idea of that the Grinch is scary and comes out once a night to terrorize the Whos.

"Halloween Is Grinch Night" features a boy named Euchariah who is on a quest to show the Grinch that he isn't afraid of him by stopping the Grinch from coming to Whoville. With trippy visuals and stark sound effects, "Halloween Is Grinch Night" is the perfect Halloween movie for anyone trying to convince their friends that they aren't a scaredy cat this Halloween.

"Halloweentown"
By Kylie Jordan

"Halloweentown" is easily one of the best Disney movies. This classic was a staple of my childhood, and always a pleasant reminder when Halloween rolls around.

This movie has every Halloween element imagined: vampires, witches, ghosts, werewolves and more supernatural creatures. The main character, Marnie, is everything you wanted to be when you were little. Who didn't want to find out they came from a line of witches and become the hero of the city using your newfound supernatural powers? This movie is a must-watch in the month of October.

"The Shining"
By Lucy Frost-Helms

"The Shining," directed by the brilliant yet semi-problematic Stanley Kubrick, is a Halloween-ish classic. The casting is perfect and it takes place in a large, empty building. It involves a writer, which are the spookiest people of all—I, the copy editor of The Alabamian, am allowed to say that, I think—and has a focal point on a creepy child, which always makes thriller films more entertaining. I mean, what do horror superiors such as "The Exorcist," "The Bad Seed," "Child's Play," and "Pet Sematary" all have in common? Creepy youths. They just add that certain oomph that will have you locking your doors twice.

Not only does "The Shining" give you all of these elements, but it gives you a genuine yet tasteful fright. The psychotic nature of Jack's delusions partnered with the remote nature of the film make for an uneasy yet fun viewing experience. Plus, to highlight its title, if you think you're telepathically communicating with someone, you can say "Dude, are we shining right now?"

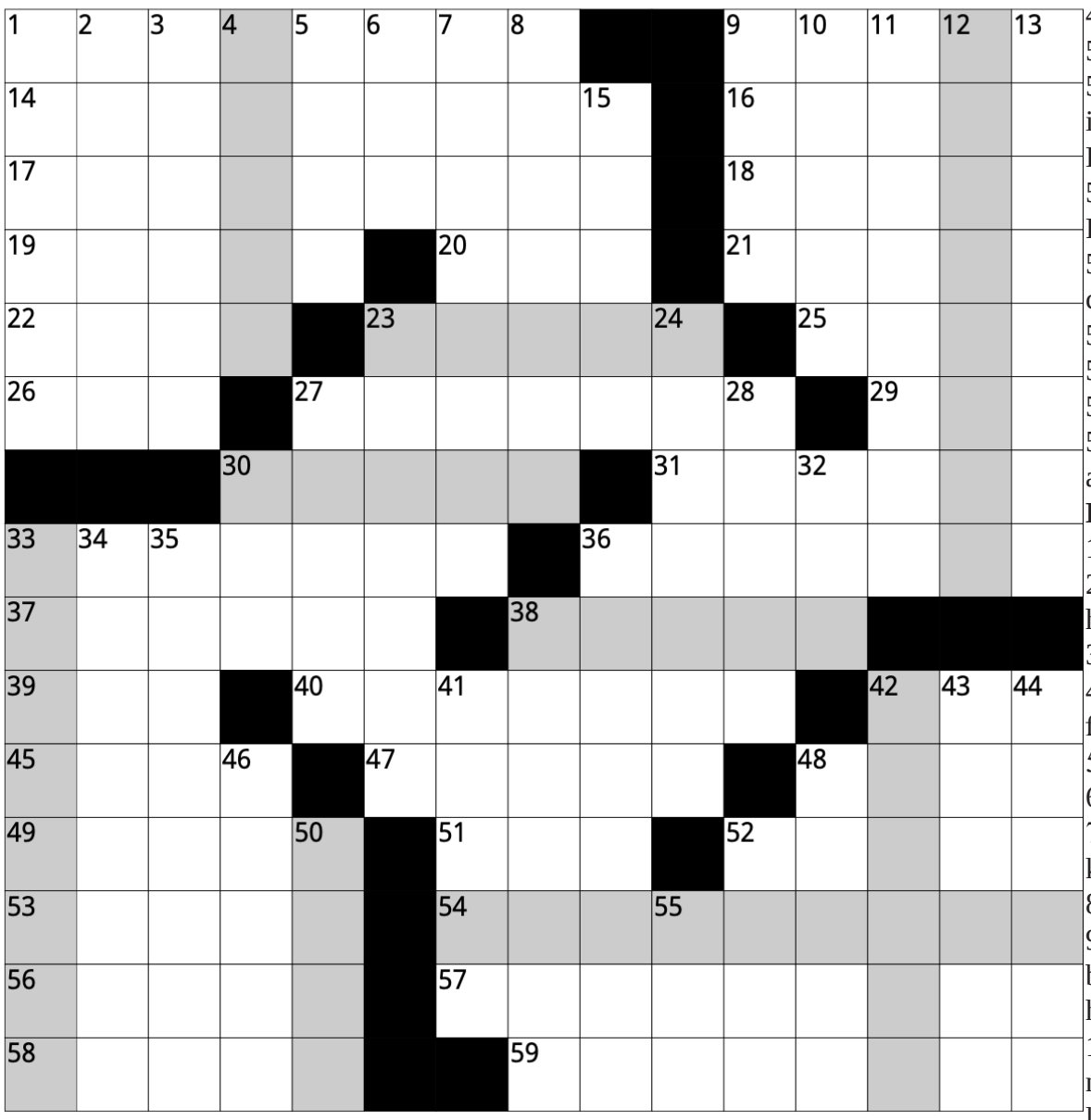
"The Exorcist"
By Wesley Walter

"The Exorcist" toes the line perfectly between being genuinely disturbing and a bit silly and goofy. It's not surprising that during its time, the film was majorly controversial and heralded as one of the scariest movies ever made. While certain special effects have aged somewhat poorly it's still, at times, genuinely frightening. The subliminal single frame faces that flash up on the screen always disturb me even though I know to expect them. The sense of dread in the beginning of the movie is also some of the best tension building I've seen in a film.

Beyond that parts of the movie are, admittedly, very funny to me. Some of the iconic quotes from Reagan while possessed—which are definitely not publishable in this article—never fail to make me laugh and makes me feel a little conflicted about my sense of humor. The special effects being such an even mix of disturbing and oddly hilarious, along with the demon Pazuzu being such a little jokester, make the movie the perfect blend of lighthearted Halloween tomfoolery and scariness.

Crossword: From hell

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:
1. Units of electrical charge
9. Have a cow
14. Immunity provider
16. Cape Verde capital
17. Prepare for July, perhaps
18. Hostess snacks
19. Likelihood, in a text
20. Fitting
21. Soup scoop
22. North of the border gas brand
23. Want of what others have (or the fourth circle)
25. "Mon ____!"
26. No longer working, for short
27. Former Supreme Court justice William
29. Ph.D. for nurses
30. Ponzi scheme, for example (or the eighth circle)
31. Gambling mecca
33. Tuesdays when you work out, maybe
36. Waiting for something to happen, a bit slangily
38. Ire (or the fifth circle)
39. Manufacturer in Asimov's "Robot" series, for short
40. Pro basketball player Dedmon nicknamed "The Mechanic"
42. Tree sort method computers use, abbr.
45. Old Russian ruler
47. ___ __ get done—when you have to pester someone to get results
48. Udder part
49. Kind of wave
51. Book before Esth.
52. Daughter of Aegon in the "A Song of Ice and Fire" series
53. District in the Okinawa Prefecture
54. Betrayal (or the ninth circle)
56. Barcelona babies
57. Sensitivity
58. Bread raiser
59. What you might have after an all-nighter

Down:
1. The friendly ghost
2. How Juliet might call to her caretaker
3. Maximum
4. Dance under a bar (or the first circle)
5. Sugar suffixes
6. Maid proceeder
7. Greek myth figure also known as Aegaeon
8. Hang
9. Abbr. for, not just one, but two now-defunct minor hockey leagues
10. "We're on _ ____ to nowhere": Talking Heads' lyric
11. Hoity-toity
12. R-rating reason, maybe (or the seventh circle)
13. Not be so harsh to
15. Middle English way to make an acquaintance, perhaps
23. TV actress Sprague
24. Måneskin singer David
27. Wearing a certain type of undergarment, perhaps
28. Nick of "Cape Fear"
30. Former Macy's company name, abbr.
32. Highest degree
33. Overindulgence (or the third circle)
34. "You betcha!"
35. Soccer great Diego
36. Food offer
38. Put on the line
41. Desire to
42. Joan of Arc's crime (or the sixth circle)
43. Spenser's "The _____ Queene"
44. Remain in a state
46. Zen garden tools
48. Small laugh
50. Passionate desire (or the second circle)
52. Most common form of birth defect, abbr.
55. __ _ standstill

Scan for answers!



By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:
Get stuck in a "Saw"-style trap this Halloween, Aries. You are more resilient than you think.

Taurus:
You've heard of man-made horrors, Taurus, now get ready for horse-made horrors. Steer clear of any ranches or there will be hell to pay.

Gemini:
You will meet your doppelganger at a Halloween party, Gemini. They could be friend or foe, be prepared for both.

Cancer:
Watch the horror classic "The Blob" this Halloween, Cancer. Be sure to avoid any slimes or goops. Or don't. It could be fun.

Leo:
Leo, you should definitely not watch "The Blob." Binging the "Leprechaun" series of horror films will be the secret to your health and wealth. Warwick Davis sends his love.

Virgo:
Strive for victory over your fears, Virgo. Go find your nearest "Lost Boys"-style vampire gang and get a single dangly earring piercing with them.

Libra:
Libra, we know about your deep fear of catfish. Go to the nearest fish market. It's the only way to get your spook on.

Scorpio:
Make sure to dust your shelves, Scorpio. Your bookshelf is about to become an EconoLodge for bugs, arachnids and other fiendish critters. Or, you could make peace with that.

Sagittarius:
Do the scariest thing ever, Sagittarius: try to grow and be a better human. If that doesn't work—I don't know, I can't really help you, I guess.

Capricorn:
Overindulge on candy corn this Halloween, Capricorn. Ignore the growing pains in your stomach, that means it's working.

Aquarius:
Confront ghosts, Aquarius. The ghosts of your past, I mean. Robbing the grave of your great uncle is the only way forward.

Pisces:
Carve a subversive jack-o-lantern for Halloween, Pisces. Get real decadent. Afterwards, make a nice little pie.



The Alabamian

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From links to leaps: UM opens cycling course

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

The University of Montevallo officially opened its long-awaited mountain biking course on Oct. 26. The course, which is located at the former site of Montevallo's city golf course, includes trails of various terrain, twisting turns into the woods and ramps for gravity-defying jumps. The course accompanies the founding of UM's Cycling team, which will be coached by Jennifer Nichols, former director of Helena High School's Mountain Bike Team.

Among those present at the ribbon cutting were UM President Dr. John Stewart, Montevallo Mayor Rusty Nix, UM Athletics Director Mark Richard, Alabama Senator April Weaver, trail-builder Preston York, UM Cycling Team Captain John Thomas Arnold and other faculty and staff from the UM community.

Local mountain biking teams from Vestavia Hills, Hoover, Helena and Hewitt-Trussville High Schools also attended the ribbon cutting, and were given a chance to test out the new trails.

Stewart began the ceremony with a welcome speech and thanked those in attendance for their support. He then acknowledged that, not only will this facility be able to host UM's cycling team, but will also be a site that gives back to the Montevallo community.

"I can't wait for the day when this facility becomes an economic boom for our community. We're going to have two to three thousand people here for events, I'm told, for the future. Not to mention a really great group of riders here at Montevallo," said Stewart.

Funding for the park was done in partnership with Discover Shelby, which promotes tourist opportunities that are available across the county. Shelby County Commissioner Jon Parker explained that the course was made possible through this partnership and a tourism fund.

"This was funded by, not your tax dollars, by any kind of sales tax, but through a tourism, lodging tax. So, that's how we're able to fund stuff with the university," said Parker.

"It's not going to be long—we're going to be standing right here celebrating a national championship for our mountain biking team from Montevallo."

Parker then went on to acknowledge Preston York of FlowMotion Trail Builders, who was the primary designer and constructor of the course. York said, "This is one of the best, possibly in the nation, courses."

The team is predicted to have a bright future. Weaver spoke prior to the ribbon cutting, saying, "I know it's not going to be long—we're going to be standing right here celebrating a national championship for our mountain bike team from Montevallo."



President Dr. John Stewart cutting the ribbon for UM's mountain biking course. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

Among the final speakers was UM Cycling Team Captain John Thomas Arnold. Arnold, the team's first ever leader, said, "Today is an exciting day, as we unveil our freshly built mountain bike course. I'm extremely excited about it."

Arnold continued, "We're so fortunate to have access to these facilities which include a dedicated short-track-cross-country dual slalom and downhill courses. These courses will give us the opportunity to host races in just about every level in every discipline."

A dual slalom course is a course of two, parallel tracks that mirror each other in a way that competitors can compete evenly while being timed.

Before the ribbon cutting, Stewart clarified that "I always blow this," in reference to the timing of the actual cutting of the ribbon. "If everyone could do 1, 2, 3 with me, that would be awesome," he said.

After the large scissors sliced through the banner, cheers and claps followed. Even more cheers and claps came when mountain bikers rode down the centerpiece ramp that the ribbon was cut from, flying into the air.

In a post-ribbon cutting interview, Stewart shared his thoughts on the benefits of the course, with an emphasis on the fulfillment of students.

"We're serving students. This is something that students have wanted and we were able to deliver it in a top-shelf way. I'm told it'll be one of the best mountain bike courses in the East. That's number one," said Stewart.

Stewart also said about the course's construction, "In a geeky administrators way, I'm excited that we were able to take something that wasn't really great, an antiquated golf course that wasn't exactly a championship-caliber golf course, and make it into something that is championship-caliber—that's one of the best in the country, as far as I know."

Following the opening, riders from local high school teams as well as UM team members took a sunset test drive through the dips and twists of the new course.

Mountain biking is one of three new sports added to UM's roster in recent years, along with men's wrestling and tumbling and acrobatics.

'Ooh, that sounds delicious': 'Revue' cast talks Sondheim

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

The UM Theatre Department's rendition of "Sondheim Tribute Revue," which showcases a compilation of songs written by composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, is set to debut on Nov. 16.

Sondheim is renowned for his compositions, which appear in musicals such as "Sweeney Todd," "Into the Woods" and "West Side Story."

According to Music Theatre International, who licenses the revue, the show contains a customizable selection of Sondheim pieces. No more than three pieces are allowed to come from the same show and excerpts from scenes or the use of sets or costumes specific to a show are prohibited.

The theatre instructors leading the show are director Marcus Lane and musical director Jennifer Hartsell.

"It wasn't our original plan," Lane said speaking on the decision to put on the revue, saying the department had intended to put on "Young Frankenstein."

"In the middle of the summer we had a faculty member who took a new job. They just happened to be the person who builds the sets, and 'Young Frankenstein' really has a big set," Lane said. "As a faculty we kind of chatted together and wanted something that really still allowed our students to showcase their talents, but didn't have a big scenic element."

Sondheim's recent death in 2021, along with UM's history of putting on Sondheim shows, were also cited by Lane as other reasons the revue made sense.

"Almost every four years over the last 20 plus years there's been a Sondheim piece," Lane said, "So for our alums there's a really strong connection."

Without the presence of a traditional set, the show will be utilizing more light cues, fog and movement by performers both on and off stage, according to Lane.

"Because I don't have a set to put people on, I'm moving people all over the stage," Lane said. "And not just in the stage but in the theatre itself, so anywhere where there's a door someone's going to be entering and, you know, exiting through it. There's people singing in the aisles, there's people up in the balcony, so we kind of had to get a bit clever about how we stage it that way."

Lane also said that he strived to make the show more accessible. He initially wanted to hire a sign language interpreter, but was unable to fit it into the show's budget. Instead, the show will be utilizing LED screens displaying the lyrics of pieces similar to a teleprompter.

"I have a couple of students that I've worked with recently who have some hearing issues. I discovered this year I'm starting to have some hearing issues, you know, so it's just one of those things wanting to make sure that we're finding ways to be more inclusive making sure that we're not excluding but we're just finding ways so more people can enjoy," Lane said.

When deciding what songs would appear in the show Lane said, "I picked three songs before we cast it. I was like these are three songs I want to have for the show no matter what. Everything else we auditioned people and then, based off their audition, we decided who we wanted to work with and then found songs we thought worked for those people."

According to Lane, the freedom to choose songs has allowed him to delve deeper into Sondheim's repertoire and showcase his less well-known works, as well as find songs that best fit their performers.

"Every note, every chord, every line has a meaning."

"For me there were a couple—I don't want to say obscure songs—but maybe not performed as readily songs that I just really love," Lane said.

Of Sondheim's work, cast member Kurtis O'Neal said, "Before I came here, I didn't really know that much. I knew that he did 'Into the Woods' and 'Sweeney Todd' but that was about it, and then I heard all of these other songs from all these other musicals and I was like, 'This is really good.'"

Sondheim was renowned for the complexity, thoughtfulness and, at times, difficulty of his music.

"There's a couple of really beautiful songs that we're doing. So, like the 'Johanna Quartet' or 'Unworthy of Your Love,' that if you didn't have people who could sing that music you'd be in trouble. We are lucky that, you know, we had people come in and audition and they were fantastic," Lane said.

The difficulty of Sondheim's compositions has been both challenging and rewarding for cast members.

"It's been hard at some times, but it's been really fun," O'Neal said, "'God That's Good.' I struggle everyday with that song, it's so hard, but it sounds so good when we all get it right."

Cast member Jaanai De La Torre said, "Some of it's really hard but it's, like, worth it in the end I guess cause he has a lot of crunchy stuff and it's like, 'Ooh, that sounds delicious,' but it's so hard to remember."

Discussing Sondheim's compositions, cast member Cole Wilson said, "Every note, every chord, every line has a meaning. It's just the more you dissect a piece the more you'll find, and I don't know if there's ever an end to the amount of thought put behind one of his—one of his works."

According to Lane, Sondheim's constant dedication to artistic improvement through mentorship and collaboration is one of his favorite aspects of the composer's works, and part of what has made him so renowned. This is also a value Lane said he has tried to impress on his students while preparing for the show.

"There's this sense of mentorship in that, you know. I think he knew he was good, but he always acknowledged that his work was better because the people who sang his songs, who played his music made it better," said Lane. "He was just somebody who I guess was really comfortable with where he was at and really loved that other people made his work better."

Speaking on why students should come to the show, cast member Delena Dean said, "If you're a fan of Sondheim you can see a bunch of his different work in like one place, and if you're not a fan of Sondheim or if you don't know who Sondheim is or if you've never even been to the theatre before it's a great chance to see a bunch of different theatre pieces and kind of see what the art can do."

Lane said he expects attendees will be impressed by both Sondheim's prowess as a composer and his students' performances of the pieces.

"There's something in the water here about students who come here who just are really great at blending together, working together and producing this magical sound."

"Sondheim Tribute Revue"

WHEN: Nov. 16-18, 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 18-19, 2 p.m.

WHERE: Discover-Shelby Theatre at the Alan and Lindsey Song Center for the Arts

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Letter from the editor: Be kind to ducks

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

This is a Thanksgiving letter, it just might take me a minute to get there.

I spent the past summer interning in Washington, D.C., and I spent a lot of my time there looking at birds. Pigeons, starlings, finches and geese were just a few of the myriad birds I would see on my walks around the city. But my favorites, by far, were the ducks.

Since March, I've been a bit hyper-focused on ducks, when my mother, who works at an elementary school, found a small, lavender plastic duck on the ground on her campus and gave it to me. Since then, I've been carrying that duck around with me in my pocket as a good luck charm and calling it my lucky duck. When I have a test or presentation in class, when I'm stressed about something or when I just want things to go my way, I make sure I have my duck in my pocket and I'm ready to go.

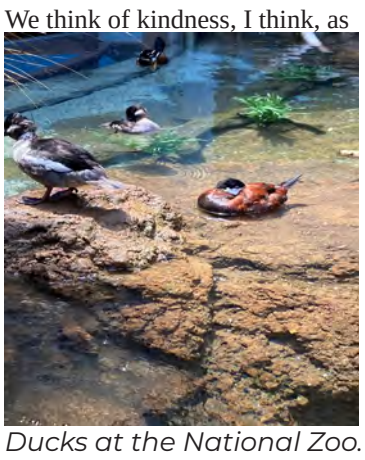
The sense of good luck that my duck figurine gives to me has now expanded to any and all ducks as well. All other duck figurines are good luck charms too. My pair of socks with ducks printed on them are now my lucky socks. And seeing a real life, living duck is the greatest omen one could ever hope to receive.

If you are ever in Washington, D.C., and you want to do some duck watching, there are many good spots. Any place along the Potomac, for instance, offers prime duck viewing opportunities, but I highly recommend the Tidal Basin near the Jefferson Memorial. If you're having a museum day, and you want to pencil in some quick duck-viewing time, the water feature outside of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian usually has a duck or two swimming in it.

But, hands-down the best spot for duck lovers in Washington, D.C. is the Bird House at the Smithsonian National Zoo. The Bird House is an indoor exhibit for—you'll never guess—birds split into three biome-based rooms: the Delaware Bay, a coffee farm and, my personal favorite, the prairie pothole—or as I like to call it, the duck room.

Immediately after entering the duck room, visitors are greeted with a sign that reads "Be Kind to Ducks." The sign is unremarkable, just listing the rules of the exhibit, but that phrase has continued to rattle around in my head since my first visit to the zoo.

I guess what stood out to me from the phrase "Be Kind to Ducks" is its lack of discernment in where we aim our kindness. We think of kindness, I think, as something very humanistic—we can choose to be kind to other people and other people can choose to be kind to us—but rarely do I think we talk about kindness as a natural, almost innate act.



Ducks at the National Zoo. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

"Be Kind to Ducks." This phrase seems to disrupt the notion that kindness is so humanistic that it almost becomes calculated by pointing out that you can be kind to the world around you—even to its smaller denizens, like ducks. And thinking about being kind to the world around you made me wonder: can the world be kind back to you? I found my answer to be yes, it certainly can be. My philosophy is that we live in a caring universe. I can be kind, and the universe will be kind back to me.

If you don't think the world around you is kind, let me ask you: have you ever stepped outside on a pleasantly sunny day? Have you ever tended a garden and watched as the plants grow from seedlings to producing a bountiful harvest? Personally, I feel as though I see kindness in the world so often. I see it whenever I go on a walk or a hike and take the time to appreciate the scenery. Perhaps it's a bit anthropocentric, but sometimes it feels like ducks exist just to remind me that universe is on my side—that I'll always have at least a little bit of luck.

Now let's talk about Thanksgiving. I know the holiday may seem disjointed from everything I've written about thus far, but stick with me here.

I think Thanksgiving is always a bit of a weird holiday for many people. Stuck between two fan-favorites, Halloween and Christmas, Thanksgiving can tend to seem a bit pointless. Like, what's the big deal about it? So, we're going to cook a big meal and pretend to get along with one another at dinner just because it's November? It's a difficult holiday to get in the right mindset to celebrate, especially when you're a college student with final exams looming over you in the following weeks. However, like many other things, I've found that Thanksgiving becomes an exponentially better holiday when you focus on kindness.

Kindness is everywhere if you look for it. It's innate and inherent in the world we live in. Thanksgiving, as a holiday, asks us to examine what we are thankful for and appreciate in our lives, so it acts as the perfect holiday to examine the little kindnesses that dot our day-to-day existences. I for one, am thankful for the natural world that surrounds me, reminding me of the beauty of existing. I'm thankful for the kindnesses granted to me by the world and others around me. And, of course, I'm thankful for ducks.

'Five Nights at Freddy's': Baby's first horror movie

By CARTER JAMES.



Promotional material for "Five Nights at Freddy's."

I haven't finished a single game. I've never read any lore. I don't watch Game Theory.

I couldn't care less about "Five Nights at Freddy's." My only attachment to the franchise is through the annoying memes. Why did I see the movie twice? I have a chronic case of FOMO.

The first time I saw it on my own, I thought it would be the first and last time. I went again on Halloween with friends because it's better than doing nothing. I've realized that most video game movies aren't good because the creatives behind them are lazy, and "FNAF" proved this once again. Since I already know the fanbase is going to have me hung and quartered for my honest opinion: your movie is a melatonin gummy.

"Your movie is a melatonin gummy."

The film is about Mike, a recently unemployed security guard who gets a job looking after a rundown Chuck E Cheese rip-off, Freddy's Pizzeria. The animatronics at the pizzeria set out to kill Mike.

Unless you're a fan of the games or are 6 years old, bring a pillow. The fans must be coping when they said they loved this movie because I was bored both times. "Five Nights at Freddy's" is a run-of-the-mill horror movie with ineffective jump scares and a shaky plot. It's almost as if co-writer and creator of the games, Scott Cawthon, just took the lore of his games and tried to stitch together a passable-enough story.

I believe possessed animatronics can be scary. But, in "Five Nights at Freddy's," they're comical. The actual animatronics created for the movie are well-made but are in no way effective on screen. I couldn't take them seriously for a second. I cackled multiple times whenever the next kill would be set up. Some of the kills were decent, but never did I feel any sense of danger or fear factor. It doesn't help that the movie is PG-13 either. The film would've been better if we saw the animatronics kill someone on screen.

Even though the movie is less than two hours, it's a slugfest.

Five nights felt like fifteen. What's even worse is that the third act rushes to make sense of the plot. Giving credit where credit is due, the film parallels the game's formula. More is revealed each night, which eventually hurts the film. Using the last 15 minutes to reveal everything comes off as messy and from left-field.

Emma Tammi is a director I'm not familiar with, and "Five Night at Freddy's" was an okay first-impression. She's competent, has nice visual presentation and gets good performances out of her cast. However, when it comes to the horror set pieces, she's pretty cut and dry. This is as basic of a horror film as it gets, and Tammi's direction is a part of that.

"This is as basic of a horror film as it gets, and Tammi's direction is a part of that."

Besides killer animatronics, when Mike is not being a security guard, he struggles to take care of his younger sister. The emotional story offers something worthwhile when the rest of the movie leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Weirdly, the conventionalism of the movie helps in delivering a more compelling, dramatic story rather than a horror story.

If there's one thing to look forward to, it's the return of Josh Hutcherson. The short king gives one of his best performances to date as Mike. His performance makes you at least care for the brother/sister story. Piper Rubio plays Mike's younger sister, Abby, and gives a strong performance for being a young actor. Even Elizabeth Lail, who plays the exposition machine Vanessa, does a good job with what little she's given. Mathew Lillard fans are vindicated for the five minutes he's in the film.

Surprisingly, this movie is well made in a technical sense. Lyn Moncrief is a cinematographer who I'll be paying attention to in the future, because a film this poorly-written should not look this good. I'm shocked to say that the "Five Nights at Freddy's" movie has some of the best cinematography I've ever seen in a video game movie. Jim Henson's Creature Shop did an excellent job bringing the animatronics to life because this movie would've been unwatchable if Freddy Fazbear was CGI.

"Five Nights at Freddy's" is a barely coherent mess of a movie that fans seem to adore, but one I can't get behind. When the focus isn't on the decent character arc, I might as well have had a white noise machine on. I can't even say this is the wasted potential of talented filmmakers because the story is so restrictive that I never saw any cinematic flourish on screen. Josh Hutcherson and the rest of the cast gave good performances, which compelled me to at least stay somewhat engaged. If there was more of a focus on delivering a good horror movie rather than cramming in nonsensical lore, maybe I would care to review this movie with a crumb of respect. Play stupid games, win stupid prizes. My decision to review this film is the most respect "FNAF" fans will get. 4/10

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Distinguished seniors awarded at Elite Night

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

The University of Montevallo celebrated the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of outstanding seniors during Senior Elite Night on Nov. 9. Vice President of Enrollment and Student Affairs Dr. Tammi Dahle opened the event by discussing the history and significance of the tradition.

"Historical accounts indicate Elite Night was an occasion to honor the beauties, the favorites and who's who of Alabama College," Dahle said. "Although it's unclear when the change occurred, Elite Night is now the occasion when we recognize students who have excelled in their academic endeavors, as well as those who are outstanding in their leadership and service activities."

At the event, Senior Class President Abigail Heuton awarded the Elite Night Dedication, which is voted on by members of the senior class, posthumously to philosophy professor Dr. Stefan Forrester.

Heuton said of Forrester, "He will be remembered for his bolstering laugh, his iconic suspenders, his love for a good philosophical debate and love for the people closest to him."

Forrester's partner, biology professor Dr. Jill Wicknick accepted the award for him.

"Dr. Forrester would be honored to be the recipient of this dedication," Wicknick said.

During her speech, Wicknick outlined a series of reminders that Forrester would have found important to give.

"Dr. Forrester would remind you to thoughtfully consider issues of public human concern, and to recognize that there are subtleties and complexities that must be considered in decision-making about human lives," she said. "He would remind you to seek truth even when it's difficult. He would remind you to love freely and deeply those who love you, and he would remind you to experience all of life fully, rather than to become too focused on a single aspect."

"He would remind you to love freely and deeply those who love you, and he would remind you to experience all of life fully, rather than to become too focused on a single aspect."

Senior Elites were recognized during the event with Dahle leading their presentation.

According to Dahle, Senior Elites are chosen by the faculty of each major for their leadership and outstanding academic performance.

"This is the highest honor bestowed by an academic department," she said.

"This is the highest honor bestowed by an academic department."

Dr. Brett Noerager, chair of the department of biology, chemistry, mathematics and computer science, introduced the Senior Elites for the College of Arts and Sciences. The recipients were Olivia Bergert for biology, Anna Katherine Eastman for chemistry, Katelyn Morrow for communication science and disorders, Tristan Ashley for computer science, Rebecca Williamson for English, Lauren Tidwell for environmental studies, Avery Campbell for health professions, Raegan Lindsey for history, Amber Fisher for mathematics, Alexander Martinez for political science, Darius Allen and Jessica Martin for psychology, Lucy Frost-Helms and Veronica Kloss for social science, Laila Hernandez for social work and Madison Taylor for sociology.

Martinez, speaking on the award said, "I worked very hard, a lot of dedication a lot of hours in silence—and a lot of hours in silence, you know, preparing for this moment—and it's nice to finally see my hard work pay off."

"I got to be honored in front of my family and, you know, it's just been all in all a great experience and I'm very thankful to the faculty in the political science department and across the university." Martinez said.

Senior Elites for the Michael E. Stephens College of Business were announced by the college's dean, Dr. Amiee Mellon.

These students were, Alyssa Frederick for accounting, Laniah Keys-Lofton for data analytics, Mitchell Fleming for finance, Meredith Camacho and Gerry York for management and Jada Bennett and Katherine Monson for marketing.

College of Education and Human Development Interim Dean Dr. Donna Ploessl announced Senior Elite winners for her college.

They were, Katelyn Peoples for education for the deaf and hard of hearing, Vanessa Avalos for elementary education, Evelyn Terry for elementary education-collaborative, Manuel Munoz, II for exercise and nutrition science- allied health, Cierra Redin for exercise and nutrition science- health promotion, Alyxandra Lucero for exercise and nutrition science- nutrition and wellness, Trudie Benson for exercise and nutrition science- strength and conditioning, Kimberly Martin for family and consumer sciences- education, Crymson Moore for family and consumer sciences- human development and family studies and Hannah Norris for family and consumer sciences- retail merchandising.

"I feel very happy to be recognized with some of my friends," Avalos remarked about the ceremony.

Dean of the College of Fine Arts Dr. Steven Peters introduced the Senior Elites from his college.

These were Stephanie Odom and Abby Truitt for art, Sean Bloemetjie for communication studies, Jayden Presley for mass communication, Katherine Monson for music, Brylie Posey for music education, Veronica Conely for music performance and Will Harrell for theatre.

Who's Who Among Students at the University of Montevallo were also recognized by Dahle at the event. Winners of this accolade are appointed by their peers during an election in the fall semester.

"Who's Who among students furthers the aims of higher education by rewarding and recognizing individual scholastic, leadership and community achievements," Dahle said.

Want to know Who's Who? Continue reading this article on our website.



College of Education and Human Development students recieve Senior Elite awards at Elite Night. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.



Elite Night is hosted in Palmer Hall. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Birdsongs and home: Lanham delivers Fallin lecture

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

The University of Montevallo welcomed Dr. J. Drew Lanham as part of the Fallin Lecture Series on Nov. 2. The series, named for retired professor emeritus of history at UM, Dr. Wilson Fallin Jr., brings speakers to present their work related to African American heritage, civil rights and social and racial justice. The series has previously featured Vonetta Flowers, the first African American woman to win a gold medal in the Winter Olympics, and Dr. Bernice A. King, a lawyer and daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lanham's lecture was held in the Alan and Lindsey Song Center for the Arts, with Fallin and his family in attendance alongside UM faculty, staff and community members.

Lanham, who is an author, poet, MacArthur Fellow and biologist with a keen interest in ornithology, is from Edgefield, S.C. He is currently a professor of wildlife biology and ecology at Clemson University.

As an author, Lanham has published "The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature," which received both the Southern Book Prize and the Reed Prize from the Southern Environmental Law Center

More recently, Lanham published "Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts."

As a naturalist and conservationist, Lanham's works are centered around the importance and depth of land in addition to poetically written details about the wildlife that call the land their home. While the animals are a focus, Lanham also focuses on his own connection to the land, which was once where his enslaved ancestors lived.

Lanham began reading from his work, with a focal point on the land that we live on and how land has been birthed, transformed and hurt.

"I think about land. In South Carolina—Alabama, in fact. I am possessed by these thoughts. I think about the lay of the land. I think about how land came to be. What natural forces have changed the land, what human forces have mangled the land," he said.

Lanham referenced the often hidden hills, creeks, forests, hollers, rivers and fields that have been converted to suit the modern-day human. He thinks about the land in which animals attempt to live on, and how conversion of land has affected wildlife.

"I think about what used to be there, perhaps flocks of green and gold Carolina parakeets roosting in the cavernous hollows of monstrous yellow poplars. I think of cool creeks running unimpeded by what some call progress. I think of no lakeshore real estate or exclusive gated communities with names made up to sound wild," said Lanham.

"Home is knowing your mind, knowing your heart. Home is knowing your courage. If we know ourselves, we're always home, anywhere."

He continued, "Even when I find the forest, the trees are often planted like row crops."

Lanham described that he closely observes, not only the land, but the structures which we have built to accommodate our lives as well. The highways we use and the suburbs we create to house condensed groups of individuals were two examples he listed. He recognized that, when he sees these structures, he imagines how they once looked and what has come of them.

In reference to a highway that Lanham uses, he said, "It is also a murderer's row for many of the four-legged creatures that try, still, to call this place home."

Lanham said his observations about land, and what humans have done with it, were a result of his acknowledgment of the land that he came from—land that was passed down through generations of slavery. Lanham, who grew up in Edgefield, described that his family grew their own food, hunted their own meat and picked their own fruit from orchards. He described how this land was made.

"It is born of some of the best years of my life. My thinking is born of my ancestors' sweat equity. These ancestors toiled the land as enslaved Africans, eventually came to own some of it and then gave away many of its riches for pennies on the dollar," said Lanham.

After recognizing the history of his well-loved land, he also stated that he believes, while the scars of slavery are too fresh for some, land that was previously used for profit by way of enslaved people is able to be reconnected to.

"But, the land, in spite of its history, still holds hope for making good on the promises we thought it could," he said.

The concept of land, which Lanham heavily focuses on in his work, transitioned into a conversation of home, as he said, "I think about homeplace, home range, homing in, homeward bound."

For Lanham, home is where the heart is, and being unhoused does not equate to being homeless.

"Home is knowing your mind, knowing your heart. Home is knowing your courage. If we know ourselves, we're always home, anywhere." He continued, "Something beyond a building, it is something beyond an address, it is something more than that place we lie our heads down at night or are sometimes reliably fed."

Lanham finished his lecture by performing two bird calls. Both species, the Bachman sparrow and bobwhite quail, are described as secretive and not widely seen.

In a final statement, Lanham said, in reference to his short time at UM, "I now feel at home."

Halloween Art Stalk boasts biggest turn out

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

Montevallo's Halloween-themed Artwalk, known as Art Stalk, was held on Oct. 28. Throughout the day, art vendors lined Main Street, stretching from Anderson Eye Care to Provenance Church.

Artwalk was started in 2011 by former Montevallo mayor Hollie Cost. Leadership was later passed on to Tiffany Bunt, and now, the Montevallo Artwalk Coordinator is Emily Gill.

This year marked Montevallo Artwalk's biggest turnout. "We had 137 booths. We had a few no-shows, maybe 10, but I think the crowd has been pretty steady," Gill said.

The price for vendors to participate was $12 for students and $25 for non-students.

"I think this is a great way for people who are established to connect with an audience, and then for people who are just getting started out to see if this is something that is going to be a viable side career or full career for them," Gill said.

This was UM freshman Andie Hites's first time selling their crochet work at an art festival. "It's been a really positive experience," Hites said.

The Artwalk's parent organization is the Montevallo Arts Collaborative.

Montevallo Arts Collaborative member Melanie Poole discussed some of the projects that the organization is involved with.

"The Montevallo Arts Collaborative brings the arts to Montevallo through visual art, the theatrical arts and musical arts. We put on Arts Fest in April, we do Tinglewood in September, we do Artwalk in October and this year we're debuting a Christmas arts festival called the Montevallo Merry Market," Poole said.

The Montevallo Merry Market will be held on Nov. 25 in the parking lots between Montevallo Family Dentistry and C's Coffee.

"We're gonna have snow, Santa Claus and Christmas music," Poole said.

Outside of the vendors, Art Stalk also included live music, a costume contest and a scavenger hunt. This year's costume contest was judged by the Montevallo Junior City Council.

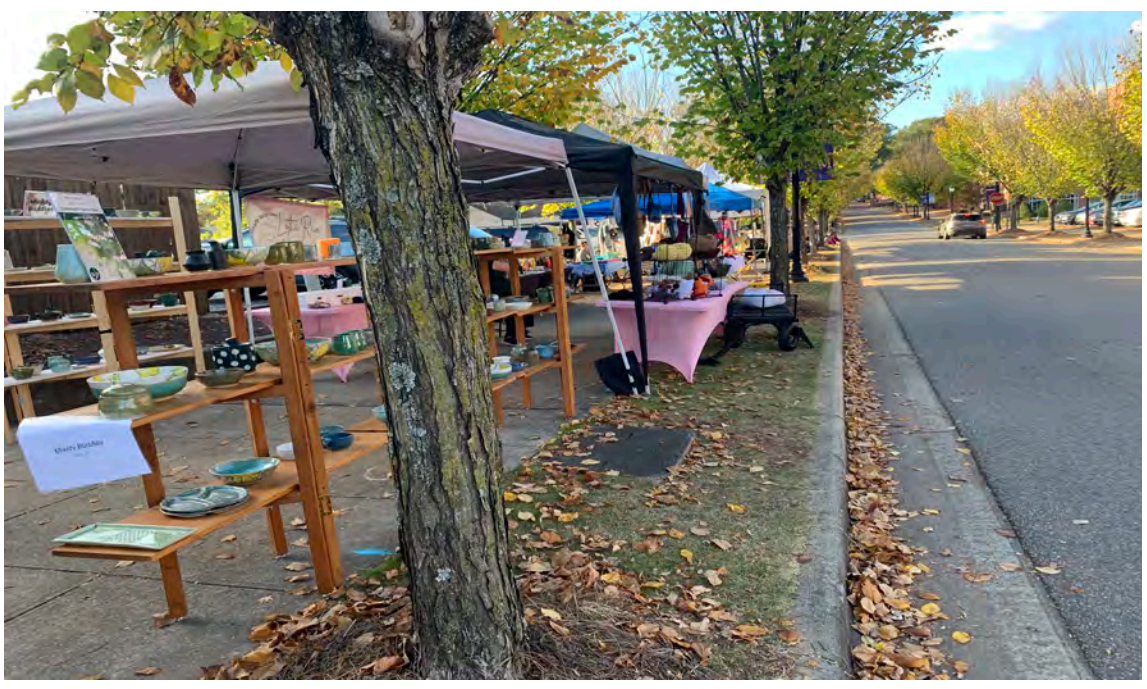
Musicians played at Owl's Cove Park throughout the day, including Ramblin' Ricky Tate, Davis Little & Haleigh Black and Kingfish.

"We also have a couple of food vendors, and, of course, everyone is enjoying the Main Street restaurants. It's great to see people come out and participate in local events and patronize local businesses" Poole said.

Poole stated that, if locals are interested in getting involved with the Montevallo arts community, to stop by Blue Phrog Gallery or email montevalloarts@gmail.com.



Vendor booths at Art Stalk. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.



Vendor booths at Art Stalk. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.

Summer tuition stable thanks to trustees

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

The Montevallo Board of Trustee's Nov. 3 meeting saw the group discussing and voting on a topic close to students' hearts and wallets: summer semester tuition rates.

Summer tuition rates will not change for summer 2024, staying at $335 per credit hour for in-state undergraduates and $700 per credit hour for out-of-state undergraduates. These rates are a $68 decrease from the fall and spring semesters for in-state undergraduates and a $137 decrease from the fall and spring semesters for undergraduate out-of-state students.

Board of Trustees chairman Todd Strange indicated that fall and spring tuition rates will be a topic of discussion at the trustees' February meeting.

Strange cited inflation as prompting the upcoming tuition discussion, saying, "We've got things, other than salaries, that are going up. We all know about our healthcare. We know about gasoline, travel, lumber and all those supplies, so somehow we've got to continue to have a fiscally-responsible product."

Strange brought fall and spring tuition up in relation to the board approving a preliminary 2024-2025 legislative budget request. All public universities in Alabama receive money from the state's budget and must request the amount they would like to receive. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the trustees voted to request $31 million—a 15% increase from the amount received in the current fiscal year.

The board voted on several other measures during their meeting as well. This included a policy allowing UM faculty, staff and students to request modifications to their UM email addresses. The policy aims to allow email users to use a name in their address that reflects their legal, preferred or professional name in addition to improving reader clarity compared to the automatically assigned UM email address names.

Under the new policy, email users will be able to request a new email name through a request form on UM's Information Service and Technology's website. These email names are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Changing a UM email name does not change users' UM usernames or logins, which will remain the same as initially assigned.

Pregnant and nursing employees were the subject of two other measures voted on by the trustees, who approved revisions to UM's disability compliance policy and benefits and leave policy.

Revisions to the disability compliance policy included adding language that outlines that the university cannot discriminate against employees based on pregnancy, childbirth or other related conditions in accordance with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. The revised policy also points out that pregnant employees can receive accommodations from UM, "unless providing the accommodations imposes an undue hardship to the University."

Revisions to the benefits and leave policy, meanwhile, focused on lactation support. The approved revisions pointed out there is a lactation room available on campus. Access to this room can be requested through the Calendar Office. Additionally, the revisions added that employees must be provided a reasonable amount of break time to express breast milk for a nursing child for one year after the child's birth and a place other than a bathroom that is shielded from view and free from public intrusion to express breast milk.

The board also heard reports from several campus bodies during the meeting, including reports from SGA President Colton Rodano, Faculty Senate President Dr. Catherine Walsh and Staff Senate President Aaron Mahaney.

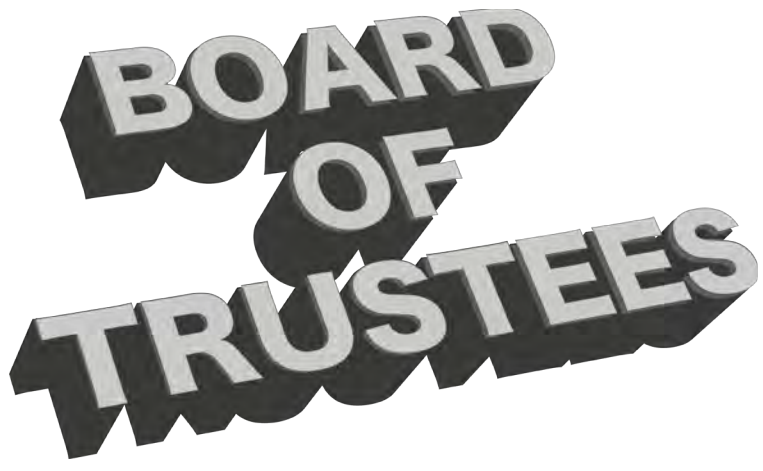
In his report, Rodano emphasized increased student involvement with SGA so far this semester. Rodano pointed out that the University Program Council events have had greater attendance this semester compared to events last year. SGA election voter turnout was also greater this semester than last year, according to Rodano—increasing from 238 votes last year to 321 votes this year. This means roughly 15% of Montevallo's student body voted in the SGA election.

Rodano also highlighted projects that SGA members have been working on throughout the semester, including a project led by SGA Senator Linea Laniah Keys related to informing students about the blue boxes located on campus and a project led by Senator Aidan Peach related to traffic sign visibility on campus.

In their reports, Walsh and Mahaney both emphasized increasing collaboration between Faculty and Staff Senates. The two senates are currently working together on a project called It's Swell Being at Montevallo!, which seeks to host events that encourage holistic well-being among faculty and staff members.

In his report, Mahaney also pointed out that Staff Senate is conducting a staff survey related to the merit pay system currently in place for Montevallo staff. Through this survey, staff members will be able to vote to keep the merit pay system or abandon it.

The Montevallo Board of Trustees' will meet again on Feb. 16 in the Merrill Room, located in Reynolds Hall.



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Falcon soccer teams celebrate senior night

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.

Friends and family members filed into Varsity Field to celebrate the achievements of this year's soccer senior class on Oct. 28. Both the Montevallo Men's and Women's Soccer teams played host to the Delta State Statesmen, and took time before each game to acknowledge all that the senior players have contributed to the program in the last four years.

The men's team played in their last game of the season, suffering a 3-1 loss after recognizing their seven seniors, with the lone Falcon goal scored by senior Julio Rojo.

Redshirt junior Matt Sheahan explained that this season has been tough both for the team and for him as an individual. "A lot of games just haven't gone our way," he said.

The team did not qualify for the postseason due to their 3-10-3 record, but Sheahan said,"I don't think it defines us as the team we are this year in terms of talent."

This year's men's senior class will be greatly missed according to Sheahan.

"Montevallo for the past two years has been a powerhouse in Division II soccer," Sheahan said, "and I think the seniors played a massive role in that."

Prior to the men's game, the women's team celebrated a 2-0 win, with goals scored by freshman Lainey Farabaugh and graduate student Kieran Burkey.

Graduate student Tori Ochoa explained just how much this season has meant to her, saying, "Lots of last games, lots of last playing certain teams, but it's been great."

"A lot of games just haven't gone our way."

The Lady Falcons have had a successful regular season, finishing 10-4-3. Ochoa expressed that the close-knit bond of the team has been a huge factor in that success.

"Everybody just wants it more for each other, so this season has meant a ton," she said.

Falcons women's soccer has also had success in the postseason, securing a spot in the Gulf South Conference Championship against Lee on Nov. 11. They beat Union 1-0 on Nov. 4, with the winning goal scored by freshman Isabel Dillehay, and beat West Alabama on Nov. 9, with goals scored by freshman Morgan Goehring, graduate student Kaeri Ward and sophomore Angelina Rivas. According to Ochoa, knowing the season could end at any moment has affected the team's style of play.

Leaving a lasting impression with the program has been an important part of this season for Ochoa, along with the team's eight other seniors.

"Obviously I wanna leave a good soccer record there," Ochoa said, "but, ideally, I just wanna be a teammate that people remember, somebody they can look towards, and was always there for them."



UM Women's Soccer senior Tori Ochoa. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.



UM Women's Soccer team celebrates a goal. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

Coming up in UM Athletics...

- The Montevallo Women's Basketball team will host its home-opener after starting the season on the road at the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic. The Falcons will face-off against Birmingham-Southern on Nov. 14 at 11 a.m. This will mark the first time that Montevallo basketball fans will be able to stream a women's basketballl game on FloSports since the Gulf South Conference partnered with the streaming platform earlier this year.
- Montevallo Wrestling hosts its innagural home-opener on Nov. 15. The Falcons will compete against Midway University after starting their season with four away meets, which included opening their season at the Patriot Open in Williamsburg, Ky. on Nov. 4 and competing at the Georgia Open in Franklin Spring, Ga. on Nov. 12. The action will kick-off in Trustmark Arena at 7:30 p.m.
- Winter sports home-openers continue, with men's basketball playing Clark Atlanta University at home on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. Similar to the women's team, the Falcons opened their season with two away games at the Gulf South Conference-Sunshine State Crossover Classic. "We could have one of the best home court advantages in the country, and we have a beautiful arena, and I'd love to see it full, and we've got guys that deserve to have it full," guard/forward Mason Shifflet told The Alabamian in a reccent interview, encouraging Montevallo students to attend their games.
- Following their home-opener, wrestling will hit the road again, this time for away meets at Life University on Nov. 18 and Limestone University on Dec. 1.
- After their home-openers, women's and men's basketball will play two away games—facing the University of Alabama in Huntsville on Nov. 25 and the University of West Alabama on Nov. 27—before returning home. While home, the Falcons will compete against Shorter University on Dec. 1 and Lee University on Dec. 3.
- Men's Track and Field starts their season on Dec. 1, competing against Birmingham-Southern at the Birmingham Crossplex.



Basketball player Mason Shifflet. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

UM esports competes in Peach Belt Championship

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

The University of Montevallo's Esports' Rocket League and Smash teams participated in the Peach Belt Conference playoffs, lasting from Oct. 27-28.

Montevallo Esports' Rocket League team entered the championship as the number one seed for the first time. This followed an undefeated season of 8-0. The team defeated some of their strongest opponents, including the University of Alabama and Auburn University, in scrimmages leading up to the championships.

UM beat both teams that they were put up against during day one of the playoffs, including the team from Florida Southern College, where former UM Esports head coach Brandon Parramore now coaches. At the start of day two, however, UM's team lost against Converse University. Later in the day, they had a rematch with Florida Southern.

"They made an impressive losers' bracket run and ended up taking that momentum into our match, where we couldn't quite pull ourselves back together," said Ethan Baggett, UM's head esports coach.

The students that played for the Rocket League team were Daultyn Bradley, Daylon Drews and Nate Smith.

"Daultyn and Daylon had played together the previous semester, but Nate was an incoming freshman who was new to the collegiate esports scene. Nate showed that he had what it takes, and the trio, despite their differences and against all odds, banded together for an incredible run against the entire Peach Belt Conference," said Baggett.

This concluded the Rocket League portion of the competition, where the team ultimately won third place in the tournament.

"Rocket League had an incredible season—record setting for UM Esports," Baggett said.

Baggett said that he has no doubts that, next year, a championship win is possible for the Rocket League team.

"Meanwhile, the Smash crew, who compete individually, were cleaning out the bracket until it came down to only the three UM players," Baggett said.

The UM team, consisting of Angel Martinez, DeAundre Phelps and Darius Allen, ended up winning first, second and third place in the tournament, with Martinez taking the lead.



UM's esports team. Photo by Carter James.

Word search: Turkey day

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

T	C	O	O	K	I	N	G	E	D	A	R	A	P
S	E	O	T	A	T	O	P	D	E	H	S	A	M
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U	I	G	N	I	V	I	G	S	K	N	A	H	T
R	P	T	I	H	Y	T	A	N	S	F	N	N	G
K	N	I	O	A	V	O	S	T	F	O	O	L	E
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FEAST
STUFFING
THANKFUL
THURSDAY
PUMPKIN PIE
YAMS
BREAK
TURKEY
GREEN BEANS
PARADE
MASHED POTATOES
BLACK FRIDAY
THANKSGIVING
FAMILY
LEFTOVERS
COOKING
NOVEMBER

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Manging editor.

Aries: I know that school has been hard on you this semester, Aries. Channel you rage and frustration into crafting the perfect turducken for Thanksgiving dinner. May it be as tender and juicy as the contents of your soul.

Taurus: Taurus, Thanksgiving is a great time to reconnect with family and watch televised sporting events. You and your grandmother should get into sports betting. If you use this opportunity to bond with her, your parlay will surely hit.

Gemini: Become your own evil twin, Gemini. Use Thanksgiving break to act out your most dubious schemes. The Alabamian will not take legal responsibility the actions that this entails, by the way.

Cancer: "Sickness is the air, Cancer. Be a freelancer, necromancer and the Tropic of Cancer." *(snap snap snap)* This is what you will be saying when you get into slam poetry over Thanksgiving break. Your poems will be as good as the one above (not).

Leo: Does your house have a crawlspace, Leo? A few nooks and crannies, perhaps? Within these spaces, place a hidden cornucopia of delectable treats—Thanksgiving food and other sundries.

Virgo: Instead of the traditional Thanksgiving turkey, purchase some pickled pigs' feet at your local gas station, Virgo. It might be your new favorite seasonal delicacy.

Libra: Libra, read 50 books over Thanksgiving break. Afterwards, just forget them. This will help you come to terms with the absurdities and ironies of life.

Scorpio: Foster the dependency of a murder of crow this Thanksgiving season, Scorpio. Become like a goth version of the bird lady from "Mary Poppins."

Sagittarius: Do something this Thanksgiving, Sagittarius. I don't know, I'm not getting paid enough to write these.

Capricorn: Out of funds, Capricorn? Join a convent of nuns. I'm sure your family will miss you this Thanksgiving, but I feel like the nuns probably celebrate it as well.

Aquarius: Start ad libing during Thanksgiving dinner, Aquarius. May I suggest saying, "Bow, bow, bow, grah, boom." It may terrify your grandmother, but it will become the predominant way you express yourself.

Pisces: Pisces, make sure to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the National Dog Show this Thanksgiving. If you can, take part in both—either as a balloon or as a border collie.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.



The Alabamian

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Happy Holidays



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

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Letter from the editor: Know thyself

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

It's the most wonderful time of the year.

No, I am not referring to Christmas or any of the other major holidays that occur around this time of year. I am referring to Spotify Wrapped season, naturally.

Getting my Spotify Wrapped is like opening a highly anticipated gift on Christmas morning. I'll start making predictions about what's going to be on it weeks in advance. When it finally drops, I'll talk about it with everyone I know.

But, I have to stop and ask myself, why do I like getting my Spotify Wrapped so much? Sure, it's because I love music and I listen to a lot of it. And, yes, of course it's just fun as well. But, at risk of trying to make Spotify Wrapped deeper than it is and, perhaps, trying to psychoanalyze myself more than is called for, I think it goes further than that. I think, at its core, my love of looking at my Spotify Wrapped is connected to a deep, innate desire to know myself.

See, it would be one thing if I was just obsessed with my Spotify Wrapped, but it goes beyond that. I get really into looking at any year-in-review I can get my hands on. I love looking at my carefully maintained lists of all the movies and books I've watched and read throughout the year. I'll revisit the albums I listened to for the first time that year and decide which ones were my favorite.

On one hand, year-in-reviews, like Spotify Wrapped, are my memories from the year. Often, I mark time by what music I was listening to, what director I was obsessed with or what book I was reading. It's interesting to look back and see how these pieces of media may have shaped my perception or experience of my life throughout the year or vice versa.

But on the other hand, I can't help but feel as though media consumption plays an outsized role in creating my sense of self, and my obsession with things like Spotify Wrapped speaks to a desire to understand myself through what media I'm consuming. What does the fact that Samia will be my top artist on Spotify Wrapped this year say about me? Or that my most watched directors were the Coen brothers? Or that I spent most of the past year reading poetry and short stories?

Some people might say that the music, movies and books I like don't really say anything about me. I am inclined to disagree. I think the media and art we attach ourselves to does say things about us simply because art is the lens through which we view and interact with the world around us. However, I think I have put too much weight in interpreting what the art I like says about me. Maybe, that's not for me to fully know.

Socrates's first step to true wisdom is "Know thyself," but I'm starting to think that knowing thyself is overrated. Not that I think a little bit of introspection is bad, but I think too much can be detrimental. The thing is, I'm always growing and changing. Knowing thyself, to me, seems to imply a static sense of self. If I focus too hard on knowing who I am, finding a definitive answer to the question of me, then I close myself off to the possibility that who I am as persons evolves with time.

I'm writing this prior to Spotify Wrapped's release, and, ultimately, I know I'm still going to get excited about it this year.There's nothing wrong with that. But, at the same time, it doesn't have to be that deep. I don't have to uncover the secret essence that makes me, me in my top 100 songs playlist. Instead, I can just enjoy the journey—and the music too, of course.

'The Holdovers': A new classic

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Maybe it's just the Hallmark industrial complex, but do you ever feel like every Christmas movie you watch kind of feels the same?

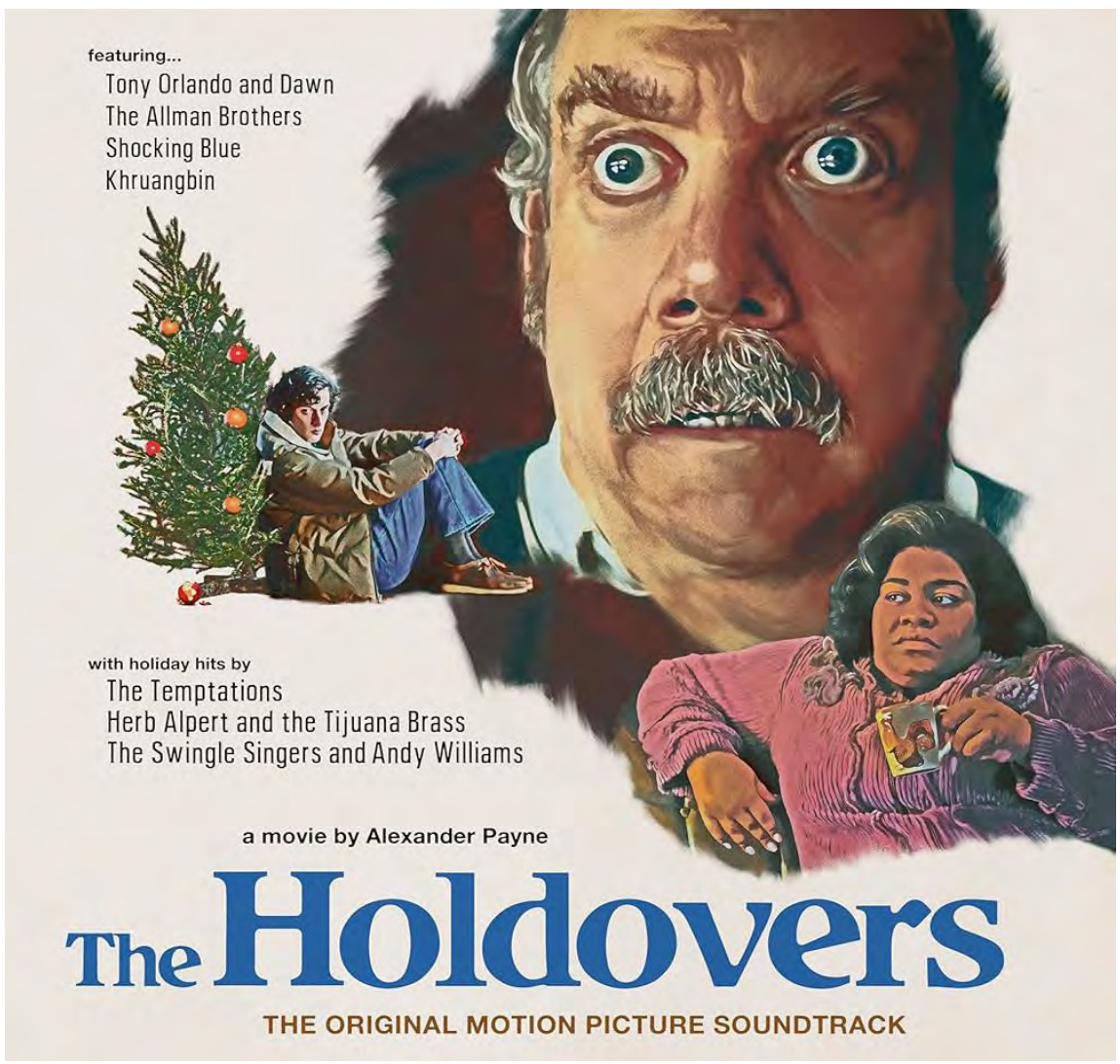
In the coinciding ages of cable TV and streaming, quantity seems to constantly be conflated with quality—a phenomenon that feels especially apparent around the holidays. The market is so saturated with straight-to-small-screen holiday releases that almost none of them are given time to breathe. Perhaps nothing makes me feel more like the magic of Christmas, and of art, is dead quite like the fact that the Hallmark channel has been premiering nearly-identical holiday romcoms every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night since mid-October, and will continue to do so until Christmas Day.

I feel like it's been a while since a real standout, instant classic type of Christmas movie has been released. Something with the staying power of "Home Alone" or "It's a Wonderful Life."

But that's exactly what "The Holdovers" is—an instant classic. Director Andrew Payne's new-retro entry into the Christmas movie catalog is the embodiment of a Cat Stevens song; somehow the perfect slice of joy and cynicism, setting it apart from the rest.

"The Holdovers," set at a preppy Massachusetts boy's boarding school in 1970, follows as a curmudgeonly, widely-unliked teacher Paul, played by Paul Giamatti, who has been left to chaperone students who are unable to go home over the holiday break. As campus vacates, he is left with only two compatriots: the incredibly smart but constantly troublesome student Angus, played by Dominic Sesa, and the school's head cook Mary, played by Da'Vine Joy Randolph, who is reeling from the recent death of her son in Vietnam.

What ensues is pure, unadulterated movie, specifically Christmas movie, magic. As the three characters spend more and more time together,



Promotional material for "The Holdovers."

they each begin to lower their guard—opening up to each other and to the audience in a way that's truly satisfying to watch. As they get into misadventures at the school's abandoned campus, at a holiday party and on an impromptu trip to Boston, you can't help but to start rooting for characters who were insufferable at the beginning of the film.

It's hard to select a standout performance from "The Holdovers" because each member of the core cast brings their A-game. It's fitting that Giamatti and his character share a first name, because Giamatti encapsulates the role of a reluctantly-caring, spiritedly-grumpy teacher and caretaker so well that I forgot I was watching someone act for most of the film's runtime. Randolph hits every high and low note of her performance seemingly effortlessly. As for Sesa, it's hard to believe that this is his debut performance as he takes on this Holden Caufield-esque role perfectly—I foresee many more stellar roles from him in the future.

Equally as mind-blowing is the 70s affect the film has taken on. Visually, "The Holdovers" has all the hallmarks of celluloid film—from grain to gate weave. I was surprised to learn that the film was shot entirely digitally. The post-production attention to detail really sells the film's commitment to making a new, old movie—utilizing all the modern tools at a filmmaker's disposal to create a final product that feels vintage and classic, while also being refreshing and exciting.

Just as integral to building the film's timeless, vintage feel is its soundtrack. The soundtrack brings together both old and new artists, as wide-ranging as Labi Siffre and Khruangbin, alongside appropriately introspective tracks from composer Mark Orton. As much as I enjoyed the movie, I enjoyed the soundtrack even more—I've caught myself revisiting it several times already.

But, ultimately, what makes "The Holdovers" a classic that I can see myself revisiting for years to come isn't all its technical mastery; it's the fact that the film feels like a respite from the deafening Christmas movie white noise. This film is not overtly idealistic, romantic, or heartwarming—categories that it feels like so many Christmas movies fall into—though it does have elements of all three. Instead, "The Holdovers," with its unlikely friendships, occasional gloom, and somewhat cynical yet earnest humor, feels so much more refreshing—so much more real. It's a breath of fresh, cold, Massachusetts air this holiday season.

4/5

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Artists sell wares at first Merry Market

By M.K. BRYANT, News Editor.

The Montevallo Arts Collaborative, which serves as the city's arts council, hosted its first Montevallo Merry Market, a holiday-themed arts and crafts market, on Nov. 25 in correlation with Small Business Saturday.

The event was held at the Village on Valley from 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. Montevallo Arts Collaborative president Melanie Poole explained that this location allowed for visitors to not only support the local artists, but also the local restaurants in the surrounding area—Slice Pizza, Boho Tea, C's Cake and Coffee House and Sunrise Donuts.

"We had great morning traffic. Of course, it's Iron Bowl Saturday, so when the Alabama-Auburn game came on we had a dip in traffic, but, all in all, I think it was very well attended. We had lots of children come out for selfies with Santa, and everyone loved the snow," Poole said.

The snow, she explained, was the result of machines blowing soap suds for children to run through. Santa also attended the event from 11 a.m.- 3 p.m.



Vendors at Montevallo Merry Market. Photo by M.K. Bryant.

Once the Iron Bowl started, an audio broadcast of the game was played for both vendors and customers to listen to.

The event featured 60 artists selling their work. Booths spread throughout the parking lots between Slice and Milestone Academy.

The Montevallo Merry Market was sponsored by Montevallo Family Dentistry, The Shelby County Reporter, Birmingham Christian Family Magazine, Shelby County Arts Council, Montevallo Main Street, Montevallo Chamber of Commerce and the City of Montevallo.

"I just want to thank everybody in Montevallo for coming out for each one of our festivals and helping the Montevallo Arts Collaborative bring the arts to Montevallo," Poole said.

People interested in the Montevallo Arts Collaborative can email the organization at montevalloarts@gmail.com. Membership for students is $10 per year, and individual membership is $25 per year.

GSD takes on Pioneer Con

By M.K. BRYANT, News Editor.



Montevallo students at Pioneer Con. Photo courtesy of Dr. Cathlena Martin.

University of Montevallo game studies and design program coordinator Dr. Cathlena Martin and students Seth Bittle, Asa Costa, Drew Hames and Andrew Wilson participated in Jefferson State Community College's Pioneer Con on Oct. 26, presenting a panel titled "Lore and Gaming."

This was Jefferson State's eighth annual Pioneer Con at their Shelby County campus. According to Jefferson State's website, Pioneer Con is a combination of a Comic-Con and an academic conference, allowing participants to engage in academic discussions based on science fiction and fantasy.

Martin explained that UM has had many partnerships with Jefferson State in the past, specifically through the ContinuUM program. This program, according to UM's website, "is a premier University of Montevallo Transfer Pathway Program in partnership with Jefferson State Community College, Lawson State Community College, Shelton State Community College, Snead State Community College, Wallace State Community College (Hanceville), and Trenholm State Community College."

"Since there's been recruiting at Jeff State before, I wanted to partner with them in an aspect that I thought fit game studies really well," Martin said.

Last year, Martin presented a panel at the conference with professor of mathematics Dr. Benton Tyler. This was her first year bringing students to the conference.

"They worked on the panel on their own. I gave them a broad topic, and then they narrowed it down themselves," Martin said.

Each student participant chose an individual focus for the presentation.

"I chose to discuss the works of From Software, the creators of 'Dark Souls,' 'Elden Ring,' 'Bloodborne,' et cetera. I specifically discussed how the company, who are notable for having a cryptic, show-don't-tell approach to their lore, used real-world imagery and literature to inform their player," Costa said.

Costa explained that, although this was his first time speaking at a panel like this, preparations were made less difficult by the fact that he was presenting a topic that he was personally interested in.

Hames focused on the aspect of worldbuilding in tabletop roleplaying games, using the game "Blades in the Dark" as an example. He explained that, with tabletop roleplaying games, worldbuilding can be left more open to interpretation than with video games.

Wilson's focus was on the work of game designer Suda 51.

"Despite not being influenced by several modern pieces of postmodern literature, since he only knows Japanese and they aren't translated to Japanese, he ended up with similar results. His work is similar to David Foster Wallace's 'Infinite Jest,' even though 'Infinite Jest' is not in Japanese. This is most likely because they took from the same inspiration, that being Franz Kafka, so the lore of modern literature and his games connect in that way," Wilson explained.

Bittle expanded on the usability of Dungeons and Dragons lore in his presentation.

"The old D&D lore is based on Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson parties, and it gives a perfect example of how the D&D lore should be handled by giving the players options to choose from and ignore as well as systems in place to make your own lore if you want to," Bittle said.

The theme for next year's Pioneer Con, "Exploration and Discovery," has already been announced.

"Pioneer Con is every year, open to the public and a lot of fun. Consider attending next year, especially if we have a panel again," Wilson said.

Each student that participated is a member of UM's game studies and design minor.

"Dr. Martin frequently talks about the GSD minor working well with any major," Costa said.

He encouraged that UM students try GSD classes that interest them, even if they're not part of the minor.

Wilson commented on seeing a lot of overlap between game studies and design and political science.

"If you think about it, both of them are about designing systems for people to interact in," Wilson said.

Students shop sustainably at eco-swap

By KENDALL MURRAY.

The University of Montevallo's Environmental Club, in partnership with the Family and Consumer Sciences Student Group, organized an eco-swap at Anna Irvin Dining Hall to teach students about sustainable clothing habits on Nov. 16.

Led by Environmental Club President Lauren Tidwell and FCS group President Anna Mitchell, the eco-swap provides a way to promote sustainability by giving used items a second life.

Tidwell explained that the eco-swap is an advanced version of the clothing swap that the E-club has held in past years.

"The clothing swap, originally, was just a way that students could bring clothing and then exchange it for other clothing that other students brought," said Tidwell.

The event also aimed to educate attendees on reducing clothing waste, with Tidwell pointing out, "It's primarily a way to just promote sustainability and sustainable habits."

According to Tidwell, it became an eco-swap because the Environmental Club wanted to expand the event to include items such as residence hall room decorations and school supplies.

Family Consumer Science students also helped out with this year's eco-swap and fit it into FCS curriculum focused on clothing and marketing research.

Mitchell said her goals for the FCS group in the future are, "To have more student involvement and just kind of being more active and known around campus because we are a very small department, so just having our name out and just being able to help the community as much as possible."



Table of clothes at eco-swap. Photo by Kendall Murray.

November city council recap

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor, and CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

The Montevallo City Council had a busy November, receiving an audit report, hearing committee reports and discussing measures related to parking and business licenses at the two meetings the group held during the month.

During the Nov. 13 meeting, council members were given information on the audit conducted on the City of Montevallo during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The audit was conducted by DeLoach, Barber & Caspers, P.C., a public accounting firm based in Pelham.

Wayne Barber, an accountant and director at the firm, gave the report on the audit to the council.

Barber opened his report saying, "I usually lead this discussion off by making a little bit of a joke about the mayor's inviting me to speak for two to three hours on—on the financial audit."

"Unfortunately, y'all have heard the joke a time or two now but the reason I do that is because I could easily talk about the financial statement that long," said Barber. "Government financial audits are pretty complicated material and you got about a hundred-page document in front of you, that obviously, if I talked about everything in there, I would be here all night and nobody wants to listen to me talk that long."

The goal of the audit conducted on the city was to determine whether Montevallo's financial statements were presented fairly and in accordance with accounting standards.

Barber went over a document describing the main points of the audit with the council members.

Barber read from the opinions in the document, saying, "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly in all material respects."

"What that means, in laymen's terms, is that you have an unmodified opinion, and that's exactly what you want to hear. That's what your readers want to hear, that's what the insurance and the bankers and the grant people want to hear. It means that you followed the accounting rules," Barber explained.

However, Barber added that this opinion does not mean the city has a perfect set of internal financial controls, nor does it rule out the possibility of minor immaterial fraud or misstatements.

From the audit report, Barber pointed out that the city's net worth was $19,000,000. Additionally, the city raised $4,058,000 in sales tax, $445,000 in simplified seller use tax and $509,000 in property tax.

Going over expenditures, he said the city spent $1,800,000 on police services, $624,000 on fire and rescue services and $7,008,000 in total expenditures, leaving $1,843,000 left over.

Sales tax was also increased by 1% during the fiscal year, with Barber reporting 90% went to the Montevallo Development Cooperative District, 1% in the city's reserve fund and other commitments going to various city projects.

Barber also presented an overview of the city budget.

According to Barber, the council budgeted $7,231,000 in revenue and ended up bringing in $8,104,000.

Barber said the council budgeted $7,183,000 in city expenditures and spent $7,008,000.

Montevallo resident Bobby C.P. Pearson asked the council whether audit information could be found on the City of Montevallo webpage. City clerk Steve Gilbert replied that the audit's financial statement would be published on the webpage once accepted, and that the audit itself could be requested as a public record.

The council voted unanimously to accept the audit, with Council member Sonya Swords absent from the meeting.

As the meeting transitioned to department reports, Montevallo Police Chief Jeremy Littleton reported that the department had a total of 599 total phone calls, 75 cases, 15 traffic accidents, 229 traffic stops, 62 traffic citations, 26 arrests, two burglaries, five domestic calls, one assault and two fraud or forgery charges.

Littleton also reported that the department made an arrest for car break-ins in the Hidden Forest neighborhood.

Councilmember Rev. Kenneth Dukes said the Montevallo Historical Commission met the Tuesday prior to the council meeting and are looking at more potential places for historic markers after the council approved two sites at their Oct. 23 meeting.

Executive Director of the Montevallo Chamber of Commerce Adele Nelson prepped the council for the Montevallo Christmas Parade, held on Nov. 30. Part of the festivities were the annual Holiday Window Decorating Contest, hosted by Montevallo Main Street. The contest consists of Main Street businesses invited to decorate their windows and student groups from the University of Montevallo and Montevallo K-12 schools invited to decorate empty store fronts.

The window decorating contest had its winners announced Nov. 30, with Montevallo Presbyterian Church Youth winning the student group category and Provenance Church winning the business category.

Approval of an ABC license for Indigo Café, a restaurant set to open at 629 Main St., was put on hold until the meeting on Nov. 27 due to the ABC board not responding as of the council meeting. At the Nov. 27 meeting, the motion passed unanimously.

Montevallo Mayor Rusty Nix recognized councilmember Leila Mitchell for completing her Certificate of Municipal Office, received by completing 40 credit hours of training in municipal government courses.

The council voted to approve an ordinance annexing approximately 6 acres of undeveloped property on Spring Creek Road into the City of Montevallo Corporate Limits.

The council voted to reschedule the Montevallo City Council Meeting on Dec. 25 to Dec. 27, in observance of Christmas Day.

The council's Nov. 27 meeting featured a discussion about University of Montevallo faculty and staff parking on city streets, as the council had the first reading of an ordinance that would allocate parking spaces along city streets near university-owned properties for university faculty and staff during working hours on weekdays.

The proposed parking spaces would be near the Global Community and Outreach Building on Valley Street and the Sharp House on Bloch Street. The university already has some spaces allocated for faculty and staff for university buildings along Oak Street.

Council member Martha Eisenberg raised concerns that these changes could affect parking for nearby businesses, such as the Main Street Tavern, saying, "Well, I just wanted to make sure it didn't affect the Tavern, any parking there for lunch."

Gilbert responded to Eisenberg's concerns by saying that, while there would be some changes to parking near Main Street Tavern, many of those spaces are already, "being taken up by students and others currently, so I don't see that as causing the Tavern any problems because most of their clients are parking either in the back parking lot or in the Trustmark."

The ordinance will be voted on at the council's Dec. 8 meeting.

The council also discussed and voted to extend a moratorium for new business licenses for 60 days, lasting until Feb. 12. Nix said the extension of the moratorium is meant to allow the city to hear back from legal counsel about an issue.

Council member David King spoke against extending the moratorium, saying, "Many of the businesses on this moratorium have the potential to bring tax revenue to this community."

King, a local business owner, ultimately abstained from the vote to avoid creating a conflict of interest, saying, "For the record, I will be abstaining from the vote because I have a business license that falls under this category. It could be argued that I would be benefitted by extending it. But I'm recommending to you that you do not."

In addition to voting on this measure, the council voted to approve the Shelby County NAACP's permit request for their annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day March. The march, which will be held on Jan. 15, will take place along Main Street.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 8, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.

Wrestling with history

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Montevallo's wrestling team. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

It's hard to deny the growth of the University of Montevallo's athletic department over the last few years. Since 2020, Montevallo has seen the addition of four new programs, including esports, cycling, acrobatics and tumbling and wrestling. These programs have brought in many new student athletes from around the world to compete for the Falcons.

Montevallo's wrestling team was officially announced in May of 2022 by university president Dr. John Stewart and athletic director Mark Richard.

"We look forward to adding to our high-achieving student athlete population," said Richard in a press release after the announcement.

Now, in the waning weeks of 2023, competitions for the brand new team have begun. Because the program has just started, it is solely made up of freshmen and transfer students. There are 37 brand new Falcons on the team, but Jeffery Tubbs and Cory Jones, two of the team's sophomores, explained the season has had its ups and downs.

"We look forward to adding to our high-achieving student athlete population."

Tubbs and Jones both attended Thompson High School in Alabaster, Ala., beginning their wrestling careers in middle school.

"For me…I tried every sport, didn't really like it, but then I tried wrestling and I was like, I can actually do this," explained Jones.

Both Tubbs and Jones are also transfer students, with Tubbs coming out of Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Ala., and Jones coming out of Allen University in Columbia, S.C.

Tubbs and Jones said they both had some apprehension coming into a brand new program. Tubbs was specifically concerned about the level of commitment from the coaching staff.

"If they weren't gonna be 100% committed, then I wasn't either," he said.

But after speaking with head coach Daniel Ownbey, Tubbs and Jones were eager to get to work. Jones explained that he felt Ownbey was going to work very hard for his athletes and to build the new program. Ownbey spent his last two years as the head coach at Wheeling University, a Division II school in Wheeling, W.Va.

"He was very pinpoint on stuff… he was very helpful without being too mean or too over-the-top," said Tubbs.

Both athletes said there were a lot of differences between Montevallo and their previous schools.

"At my old school, I could just breeze through the practices," said Jones. "Here at Montevallo, you gotta take every practice one day at a time."

Tubbs added, "they definitely extend your limits." Jones continued with a laugh, saying, "hasn't broke me yet, but it be close sometimes."

Most athletic teams at Montevallo compete in the Gulf South Conference. However, the GSC does not offer wrestling, so the team competes in Conference Carolinas, which is home to some of the best wrestlers in Division II.

Conference Carolinas has member institutions throughout Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina, meaning Montevallo's wrestlers spend a lot of time on the road.

The Falcons had a dual meet against Allen on Nov. 8, their second competition of the season, earning the program's first win against Jones's former school.

"For a team to win a tournament, every person has to do well," explained Jones. Every individual competitor is in a different weight class, and receives a certain amount of points in their matches, depending on how they win, that contribute to the overall score of the team.

Jones is in the 125 weight class and said that he wrestled well that day. He also said that earning a team victory there meant a little bit more to him, as it was one of the meets he was most looking forward to during the season.

Tubbs is in the 184 weight class, and was named the men's Montevallo Player of the Week for his personal success on the mat during the meet.

"It kinda tells everybody in our conference that we're here to stay really. We're not just a first year program, but we came here to win," said Tubbs.

Following the dual meet against Allen, the Falcons competed in another duel against Newberry University on the same day, one of the best teams in the Conference Carolinas, but unfortunately suffered a tight loss to the Wolves.

Tubbs has high hopes for the team, even after the early season loss. "We went toe to toe with the second team in the conference, and with a team full of freshmen, I think we can really get that up," said Tubbs.

On Nov. 15, Montevallo hosted Midway University in a duel. Nearly 2,000 Falcon fans packed the seats of Trustmark Arena to watch Montevallo's first-ever wrestling meet result in a win for the home team. The energy in Trustmark was electric according to those in attendance. Tubbs won his matches handedly in front of the Falcon Faithful.

The team hopes to carry that energy into the rest of their season and both athletes have big goals for the coming months. Tubbs is looking to reach All-American status this year, while Jones hopes to achieve the same thing at some point in his career at Montevallo.

The team is looking for all the support they can get in Trustmark Arena on Jan. 30, at their second and final home meet of the year.



Jones and Tubbs. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.



Crowds cheer. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

Winter athletics schedule

DATE	TIME	TEAM	HOME/AWAY
12/8/2023	5:30 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Mississippi College
12/8/2023	7:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Mississippi College
12/9/2023		Men's and women's swimming	at Delta State
12/10/2023		Men's and women's swimming	at Delta State
12/10/2023	2:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Delta State
12/10/2023	4:00 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Delta State
12/11/2023		Men's and women's swimming	at Delta State
12/12/2023		Men's and women's swimming	at Delta State
12/13/2023		Men's and women's swimming	at Delta State
12/15/2023	5:30 p.m.	Women's basketball	vs. University of West Georgia
12/15/2023	7:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	vs. University of West Georgia

Holiday recipes

Good Old-Fashioned Cabbage

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Cabbage is my favorite vegetable, and I have perfected this recipe that was loosely taught to me by my dad, and his grandmother before him. The best thing about cabbage is that it's cheap, and when cooked properly, it will fill your arteries, but sometimes that's just what you need in the darkness of winter. It's a labor of love, which translates to it taking a long time, but it is so worth it. Serve with rice, a baked potato, beans, tortilla chips, Kit Kats, or anything else that you would like to eat.

Ingredients:

1 whole cabbage

Roughly ½ a stick of butter (add more if you want though—this is your cabbage)

A pinch of sugar

More than a pinch of salt

2 tablespoons corn oil (or enough to coat the cabbage)

A large soup pot that is preferably worn in

Stirring utensil (whatever you can find)

Directions:

Peel off any gritty bits of the cabbage, chop out the core, and cut into 1-inch pieces. Put all of the pieces into the sink, filled with water, and thoroughly rinse it. Dry the cabbage and place into your pot. Add about two tablespoons of corn oil and begin to cook the cabbage on medium heat. Cook until it has some color then begin to add tablespoons of butter at a low heat. Add salt occasionally—you will need more than you think, but add butter and salt at the same time over the cooking period and keep tasting until it's salty enough for you. Continue to cook the cabbage on low heat for a little over an hour until the cabbage is soft and tender with a touch of color. When it is ready, add a small pinch of sugar to finish it off. There you go! Just remember to keep stirring and cook on low heat. This is not a recipe for impatient people!

Green Bean Corn Caserole

By MADELINE BURBANK.

This is a recipe handed down from my grandma, probably taken from a magazine at some point. It's easy to make, and makes 10 servings. Prep time is one hour.

Ingredients:

1 can Shoepeg corn (white), drained

½ cup celery, optional

1 can french cut green beans, drained, mostly

½ cup onion, chopped, sautéed

¼ cup bell pepper, chopped, sautéed

½ cup cheddar cheese, grated

½ cup sour cream

1 can cream of celery soup

Salt

Pepper

Topping:

1 row Ritz crackers, crumbled

¼ cup margarine (I normally use butter)

½ cup almonds, slivered

Directions:

Sauté onions and bell pepper (optional) in a little butter in the microwave until tender, about 1-2 min on high. Stir all ingredients together and spread in 9x13 casserole dish. Mix topping ingredients together and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 min., or until bubbly.

Uncle Lucy's Christmas Punch (You in the Face)

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

This punch is a Christmas classic, for me, at least. It will make you commit—nothing to your memory, that is—and surely begin many holiday feuds with your family. But, hey, it works! This recipe is my own, and is not for beginners. I hope you have a handy cousin hanging around to hold back your hair.

Ingredients:

2 oz of apple vodka

2 oz of cinnamon rum

2 oz of coffee rum

3 oz of apple cider—alcoholic or not—this part is up to you

Directions:

Add all items into a glass (because what 22-year-old has a shaker), stir with an available utensil, and then pour over a full glass of ice. Garnish with dehydrated apples and a cinnamon stick if you would like. Happy drinking! This will surely start something exciting.

Johnny Ray's Chocolate Pie

Contributed by LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

While this recipe is not my own, it is a holiday classic around my house and is a copy-cat version of the magical chocolate pie from Johnny Ray's BBQ. After my family moved from Alabama to Kentucky, then Tennessee, the pie became difficult to acquire due to travel reasons, and we always eat it at both Thanksgiving and Christmas. So, I took it upon myself to start making them, and this recipe is the closest version that I have been able to find. It comes from "Just a Pinch," an online food blog. The recipe makes two pies, which I tend to do. You won't regret making it, I can tell you that much.

Ingredients:

2 pie crusts (homemade or pre-made, but I'm not teaching you how to make the crust in this blurb, young lady)

4 cups of milk

4 eggs

1 stick of butter

1 ¾ cups of sugar

6 tablespoons of cocoa powder (Hershey's unsweetened will do the trick)

1 cup of flour

For the whipped cream:

2 pints of heavy cream

2 cups of confectioner's sugar

2 teaspoons of vanilla extract

Directions:

Bake your pie crusts according to their directions and let cool.

Combine the flour, cocoa powder, and sugar in a bowl and whisk thoroughly. Add 1 cup of the milk, and whisk again until it forms a paste. Add the rest of the milk and eggs, whisking out all of the lumps. Add the pudding to a deep pot with the butter (cut into pieces) and stir on medium heat until it forms a thick, pudding-like consistency.

Add the pudding into the crusts and set in the fridge to cool. Let the pies sit overnight then add the whipped cream topping right before serving. To make the whipped cream, simply combine the cream, sugar and vanilla to a large mixing bowl and whip with either a hand mixer or a whisk until it forms, well, whipped cream.

Top the pies with whipped cream and you're good to go! You can thank me later.

Uncle Lucy's Green Smoothie

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

After consuming three or four of Uncle Lucy's Christmas punch (You in the Face)'s, you will need to detox the morning after. Take it easy on the stomach with a pungent and delightfully shocking green smoothie. Here's my recipe.

Ingredients:

3 cups of no sugar added apple juice

1 cup of frozen spinach

1 ½ cups of frozen wild blueberries

1 ½ cups of frozen pineapple

A sprinkling of frozen strawberries

Directions:

Blend all ingredients in a blender. If you don't have a blender, chew all ingredients thoroughly and spit them back out into a cup. Serve with several ibuprofen on the side.

Find these recipes on our website!



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Holiday viewing recommendations

By THE ALABAMIAN'S STAFF.

"Home Alone 2: Lost in New York"
By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Promotional material for "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York."

A couple of years ago, I wrote about my love of "Home Alone" in this very newspaper, calling it my favorite Christmas movie. But I have a confession to make: "Home Alone," while certainly a deeply beloved classic, is not my favorite Christmas movie. My real favorite Christmas movie is "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York."

While I'm aware, from a technical standpoint, "Home Alone 2" is probably significantly worse than the original film, that fact matters very little to me due to the fact that it's a silly movie that I liked when I was six years old. "Home Alone 2" is an ultimate wish-fulfillment movie for me. Not that I've ever necessarily wanted to be separated from my family while going on vacation, but I think there's something to be said about how "Home Alone 2" manages to capture what feels like every child's desire to go off on some grand adventure by themself—to, metaphorically, in terms of Kevin McCallister's desires, have their very own cheese pizza.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas"
By MAEGHAN JEREMIAH, Layout designer.



Promotional material for "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

Jim Carey's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" from 2000 has been my favorite Christmas movie for as long as I can remember. I've seen this movie so many times I can probably recite the whole thing. I even watch it when it's not Christmastime.

I feel like The Grinch and I have a lot in common. No, I'm not mean, but I do like to be alone. Also, in the end, I will open up when treated kindly and when I'm around people I like.

Also, I would like to make an honorable mention to Max, the dog. He is so cute and makes the movie better just by being there.

I prefer the 2000 Grinch because I just really enjoy how Jim Carey embodies the character. I enjoy the recent animated one put out in 2018, but it just doesn't compare.

I feel like "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" will forever be my favorite Christmas movie. I highly suggest watching it if you haven't — although I am sure we all have.

"Die Hard"
By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

I'm not writing this to join in on the infamous "Is 'Die Hard' a Christmas movie?" debate—even though, in my opinion, it definitely is.

Christmas movie or not, "Die Hard" is genuinely one of my favorite movies to watch during the holiday season. Obviously, it wasn't a major part of my childhood, or anything like that. I'd be a bit concerned if it was, given its R-rating. I was introduced to the movie for the first time in high school, and it quickly became a favorite.

"Die Hard" is a staple in cinema, specifically, the action genre, and it has a little bit of everything that makes a movie good. Drama, suspense, even comedy—you name it, "Die Hard" probably has it.

One main critique I see from people who refuse to view "Die Hard" as a Christmas movie is the idea that it doesn't convey any Christmas-themed concepts or values—it's simply an action movie that happens to take place during Christmastime.

In my opinion, however, the central story of "Die Hard" is about a man who, despite being estranged from his family, saves the day and finally reunites and reconciles with them on Christmas Eve. What could convey the holiday season better than that?



Promotional material for "Die Hard."

"Funny Pages"
By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Promotional material for "Funny Pages."

As someone whose lived in Alabama his whole life, New Jersey is a fascinating place to me. Not because I have any real affinity for or connection to the state, but just because I am drawn towards its general vibe of hopelessness.

It's not like Alabama is any better, really, and I'm sure there are some perfectly cool and nice spots in New Jersey. But, watching "Funny Pages" has perhaps been the most impactful push towards my, admittedly, prejudiced conclusion that, instead of the Garden State, New Jersey would be better referred to as the "Chemical Waste Runoff State."

This is perhaps the greasiest, grimiest, least Christmasy movie that has ever happened to take place during Christmas. It's also, at points, very funny and fills me with hope that, if the most miniscule glimmer of humor and fleeting joy can be found in the shivering tar pit that is Trenton N.J., I can similarly laugh at and come to terms with holiday season bleakness

I don't recommend "Funny Pages" as the ultimate Christmas film at all since, to be honest, I forgot it was set during Christmas for 90% of its run time. I would also seriously think twice about recommending it to about 90% of people, but I do think it is a pretty good black comedy.

Even the most unlikable and vile characters, who make up most of the film's cast, contain at least some likeable uniqueness and fleeting moments of human decency, making the film an oddly sympathetic and realistic portrayal of humanity to me.

I might just be insane, and to others the film might be irredeemably bleak and, at times, mean. But, I think there is something to be said for the fact that it shows how even the worst dregs of society are just trying their best and contain some capacity for goodness—however miniscule and misguided that goodness may be.

If this sounds up your alley, I think the film is worth a watch, but it's probably still best to do so on an empty stomach.

"Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory"
By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

The main draw of "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" is that it is centered around chocolate, which is one of my favorite food groups. The second draw, for me at least, is that Willy Wonka's factory is similar to an amusement park, which, in my eyes, is the greatest thing on planet Earth. I have always been a massive fan of any amusement park, and when you combine one of the greatest food groups with one of my favorite activities, I am sure to love it. The third draw, of course, is Gene Wilder, may he rest in chocolate heaven.

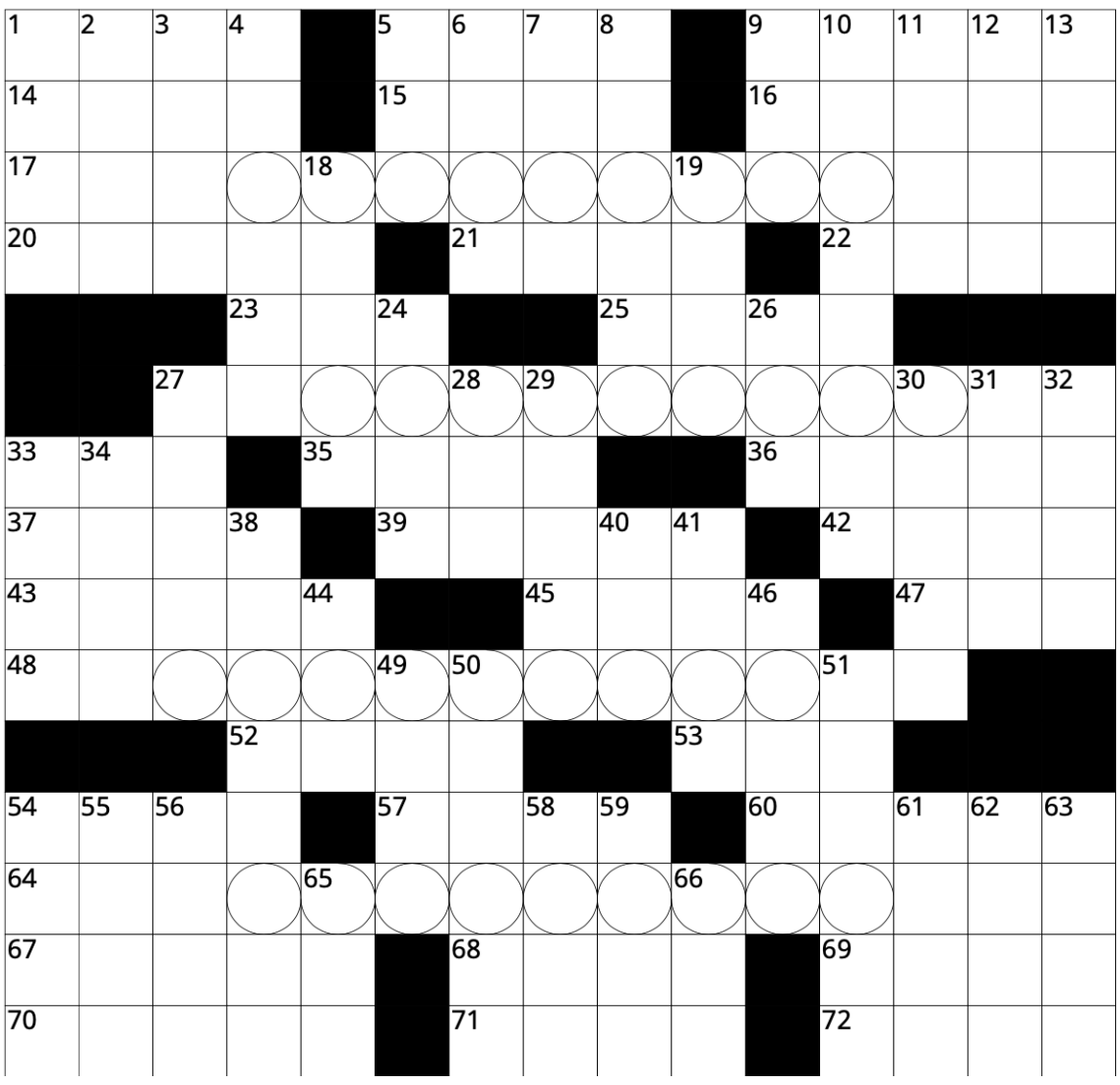
This movie gives me a form of nostalgia like no other—the kind of nostalgia that you get around the holidays, which makes this movie an appropriate film for me and you to watch in this festive season.



Promotional material for "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory."

Crossword: My true love gave to me...

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Man's second best friend, according to statistics
5. "Harlem World" rapper
9. Tug's tow
14. Hip bones
15. Base opposite
16. Early anesthetic
17. One option for first day of Christmas gifts
20. Tech debut of 1981
22. System using radio waves to locate objects, abbr.
23. Drill sergeant's syllable
25. Luxury hotel chain
27. One option for first day of Christmas gifts
33. Company abbr. en français
35. Really expensive baby cradle brand
36. In the lead
37. "Mad Money" network
39. "The Golden _____"
42. Branching computer science structure
43. Namesake of an inflammatory digestive disease
45. Hockey star Brandon
47. Sumatran capital abbr.
48. One option for first day of Christmas gifts
52. Den
53. Blood-typing letters
54. Biblical twin
57. Apiece
60. Milk dispenser
64. One option for first day of Christmas gifts
87. Gymnast Korbut and others
68. Roof edge
69. Director Lee and others
70. Reduce drastically
71. Slid into a conversation
72. Dissolve, as cells

Down:

1. Pizza buffet chain namesake
2. Request to a hairdresser, maybe
3. Soundtrack composer Doug
4. Lesbos poet
5. Deface
6. Fills a role
7. Apple assistant
8. An employee of this publication, perhaps
9. Plead
10. Followed a diet, maybe
11. Nose prefix
12. Duo 100 ____
13. Spanish 101 words
18. Parts of some bras
19. Actress Moore
24. 2019 Caroline Polacheck album
26. Confidential doc
27. Jazz variety
28. French king
29. Trunks
30. Spine-tingling
31. Uttered
32. user of some date music technology, perhaps
33. Letters on Sputnik
34. Cross inscription
38. Fried Taco Bell order
40. Young fellow
41. It's a long story
44. Gun lobby org.
46. Fix
49. Layer
50. Not for kids
51. Result when negotiations go south
54. Big heads
55. Window part
56. Ancient eastern Indian kingdom
58. Study last minute
59. Honey spot
61. Big Apple fashion initials
62. Early birds
63. Stood
65. ___ Wednesday
66. Nu metal band

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Aries:
Start family feuds this holiday season, Aries. May we suggest having a glass of Uncle Lucy's Punch (You in the Face)—see recipe on page 6—beforehand. It will help you.

Taurus:
Have a Kentucky fried Christmas, Taurus! Find the largest chicken bucket available at your local chicken establishment, and eat it for Christmas dinner.

Gemini:
Lean into your deviance this holiday season, Gemini. Have a Kevin McCallister-style Christmas and rig your house out with booby traps. Your family will be greatly impressed with your security skills.

Cancer:
Cancer, I see a great financial opportunity in your near future. Reindeer give off a great holiday season vibe. Start a caribou ranch.

Leo:
Lean into your catlike nature, Leo. Lay in beams of sun. Play in a cardboard box. Eat some wet food, perhaps.

Virgo: Gorge yourself on your grandma's Christmas dinner turducken, Virgo. Make sure her cat, Scrappy, doesn't get on the table, though. He's been admiring its supple legs from afar, so keep an eye on him.

Libra:
Get back to nature this winter, Libra. By which I mean, start killing it. Go chop down a Christmas tree. Make sure you incorporate the sap in your holiday baking.

Scorpio:
Get an elf outfit from your local Goodwill, Scorpio. Your younger relatives will love it and are not yet cognizant enough to see how raggedy you look.

Sagittarius:
It's that time of year, Sagittarius. You know what you must do: rediscover your love for NORAD's Santa Tracker. Commit to finding Santa. Ask your parents for plane tickets and follow his route.

Capricorn:
This Christmas will be your worst, Capricorn. Don't shoot the messenger, but I see something along the lines of you getting tied to some train tracks. Maybe start sharpening your teeth so you can bite your way to freedom.

Aquarius:
I'm not really sure what you should do over the break, Aquarius. Hike the Appalachian Trail. Work on an off-shore oil rig. Do whatever you want.

Pisces:
Do you hear that tippy-tap-tapping on your roof, Pisces? It's not Santa, its Cancer's caribou, escaped from the ranch. Adopt them as your own. Prepare them a lovely Christmas dinner feast.

The Alabamian

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New restaurants hit Main Street Montevallo

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Indigo Café and Bar. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Several changes to the culinary landscape of Montevallo Main Street occurred during December 2023. While Baba Java Coffee closed its location at 620 Main Street on Dec. 9, two new restaurants have opened up on Montevallo's main drag.

Main Street's newest restaurant, Indigo Café and Bar, officially opened to the public on Dec. 12.

Located at 629 Main Street, Indigo Café and Bar marks chef Indigo Aulbach's reentry into the culinary world after 10 years of absence.

Aulbach graduated from culinary school in San Francisco in 1995, and has worked in catering and restaurants across the country since he was a teenager. His experience includes working as the Executive Sous Chef of Parasole, a chain of restaurants in the Minneapolis area where he moved in 2004.

Aulbach, however, has spent the last 10 years working various nursing positions, leaving his position at Parasole after the birth of his daughter Bennett Aulbach in hopes of spending more time with her.

Aulbach moved to the Montevallo area to be closer to Bennett, who currently attends the University of Montevallo. This led to him discovering the over 100-year-old vacant location on Main Street.

In an interview with the Shelby County Reporter, Aulbach described wanting to create a space in Montevallo that provided fine dining at an affordable price.

Aulbach said, "My daughter goes to the University of Montevallo. She and her fiancé deserve to go have a nice meal, a nice home-cooked meal and not break the bank and be able to do that on a regular basis."

Indigo Café and Bar's website describes the menu as, "classic American food... comfortable, recognizable, affordable."

The website also describes Indigo Café as being, "Inspired by the great American artists, adventurers, and misfits of the 20th century." According to Aulbach, these inspirations include some of his favorite creatives such as Billie Holiday, Anthony Bourdain and the Ramones.

Indigo Café held a soft opening Dec. 12, serving over 50 members of the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and continued to host private holiday parties until it's public opening on Dec. 18.

According to the restaurant's Facebook page, Indigo Café will be open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to midnight and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Indigo Café is not the only newly-opened restaurant on Montevallo Main Street, with Soul Spot Soul Food making a return to its location at 728 Main Street on Dec. 5.

While this marks the return of Soul Spot's permanent location, the company has remained active in the Montevallo culinary scene after its original closure with its catering and food truck services.

Originally opened as Soul Spot Wings on Oct. 9, 2021, the location on Main Street will now feature a more general soul food and meat-and-three menu.

New semester, new leadership

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

The spring semester is starting with some changes for the University of Montevallo's College of Education and Human Development and Michael E. Stephens College of Business. Both colleges will start the semester with new leadership, with Dr. Donna Ploessl taking the reins as the dean of the College of Education and Human Development and Dr. Amiee Mellon stepping down as the dean of the College of Business.

Ploessl has served as the interim dean of the College of Education and Human Development since June 2022.

Ploessl has been a UM faculty member since 2017, serving as an associate professor of special education prior to stepping into the role as dean. Ploessl's time at UM has been marked by numerous awards and recognitions. She earned the College of Education's Ernest Outstanding Commitment to Teaching award in 2022 and the Council for Exceptional Children's Jasper Harvey Award for Alabama's Outstanding Teacher Educator in 2019. Ploessl's research, focused on the preparation of educators, has also been published in several journals including the Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators, the Journal of Special Education Preparation and the Annals of Anthropological Practice.

In addition to her position at UM, Ploessl serves on the Alabama State Department of Education's Higher Education Task Force on the Science of Reading. She is also an external reviewer for conference proposals for the Council of Exceptional Children.

In a university press release, Ploessl outlined her goals as dean, saying, "In alignment with the college's mission, I am committed to fostering a learning environment that values diversity, inclusion and excellence. I look forward to leading our dedicated faculty, staff and students in a collaborative supportive community that fosters the comprehensive development of individuals."

"In alignment with the college's mission, I am committed to fostering a learning environment that values diversity, inclusion and excellence."

As dean, Ploessl will oversee all of the College of Education and Human Development's undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The college offers undergraduate degrees in education of deaf and hard of hearing, elementary education, elementary education with collaborative teaching certification, exercise and nutrition science and family and consumer science. Graduate degrees offered through the college include master's degrees in elementary, secondary and P-12 education, instructional leadership, educational studies, exercise and nutrition science and counseling.

Meanwhile, Mellon's resignation as dean of the College of Business was announced over the winter break on Dec. 21. Mellon, who was named dean of the college in July 2023 and had served as the interim dean prior to that, will continue to serve as a UM faculty member—returning to her role as an associate professor of marketing.

While she was dean, Mellon help to develop several new concentrations and minor programs within the college.

While the university searches for a new dean, UM alum Dr. Lynne Richardson will step into the role of interim dean. Richardson has previously served as the dean of business schools at the University of Mary Washington and Iona College. She has also been involved with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business—an organization that oversees the accreditation and development of business schools—serving two terms on its board of directors.

Richardson's main responsibilities as dean will center around leading the College of Business through its AACSB accreditation process, as well as assisting in the dean search process—as the university aims to have a new dean take over in January 2026.

December city council recap

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Parking for University of Montevallo faculty and staff, property rezoning and repairs for Parnell Memorial Library were all topics of discussion at the Montevallo City Council's two December meetings.

The council voted unanimously at their Dec. 11 meeting to create parking zones on city streets in which only University of Montevallo faculty and staff would be allowed to park in on weekdays from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

The new parking spaces will be located near the Global Community and Outreach Building on Valley Street and the Sharp House on Bloch Street. These newly allotted parking spaces join other university spaces along Oak Street.

Discussions of the ordinance at the council's Nov. 27 meeting raised concerns about lunchtime parking near Main Street Tavern in particular, but the ordinance passed with little discussion at the Dec. 11 meeting.

In addition to passing this measure, the council held public hearings regarding rezoning three pieces of property at the Dec. 11 meeting. All properties discussed are owned by the same individual, Scott Lovelady, and the council voted unanimously in favor of rezoning all three.

One of Lovelady's properties, located off Highway 25, was redesignated from business zoning to industrial zoning. Lovelady, who was present at the meeting, said his request for rezoning this lot is to allow him flexibility in converting the lot into a storage lot business for things such as RVs, campers and boats.

In discussing rezoning, council member Martha Eisenberg pointed out that there are already businesses like this in Montevallo, but this did not seem to concern other council members, with council member David King responding, "I don't particularly think more hurts."

For another property, located near the American Village off of Highway 119, Lovelady sought to the change the zoning from a business designation to a residential designation, saying he hopes to build three houses on the 2.61acre lot.

For his final property, located along Spring Creek Road, Lovelady had similar aims of building houses, but sought to rezone the property to estate designation. Estate zoning designation requires that each house built on the property have a minimum of one acre of land.

At the council's Dec. 27 meeting, repairs to Parnell Memorial Library were the main topic of discussion.

The council voted unanimously at this meeting—with Eisenberg absent—to amend the city's fiscal budget to increase the amount allotted to building repairs and maintenance for the library from $3,500 to $13,500—almost quadruple the amount originally allotted.

The main concerns lie in the building's plumbing, as there have been several leaks recently. The water fountains in the library are also in need of repairs and, potentially, replacement.

City clerk Steve Gilbert said of the repairs, "We've got a 21-year-old building that is beginning to show the need for significant maintenance."

Also at the council's Dec. 27 meeting, Mayor Rusty Nix read a proclamation honoring Dr. Terry Sutton ahead of his retirement from the role of pastor at Montevallo First Baptist Church—a role Sutton has held for 16 years.

Nix pointed out that Sutton has been heavily involved in the Montevallo community in addition to serving as a pastor. Sutton has previously served as President of the Montevallo Rotary Club, on Shelby Emergency Assistance's Board of Directors and on Parnell Memorial Library's Board of Directors.

Sutton's final sermon as pastor was held on Dec. 31.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Jan. 8, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

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Letter from the editor: *Joie de vivre*

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Ask any of my friends or, really, anyone who knows me: one thing about me is that I love having a little project to work on.

Not to sound like I'm trying to get you to give me a job—though, if you are in the position to do so, I would like to throw out there that I will be graduating in just four short months—but I am an extremely goal-oriented person. I get a lot of satisfaction from setting to work on a specific goal or project and then getting to see the follow-through. It's what motivates me to do a lot of things and it's something that I get a lot of fulfillment from.

Given this, you would think I'm good at keeping New Year's resolutions. And, well, mostly I just like setting them, but I'd like to think I'm pretty good at keeping them too. But half of the reason why isn't because I love projects or because I'm goal-oriented. Rather, it's because I think I have a little bit of a different approach to New Year's resolutions.

New Year's resolutions tend to get a bad rap—often thought of as lofty, aspirational but ultimately unattainable goals. This isn't an entirely unearned reputation. Forbes reports that the average resolution lasts 3.74 months. But why do resolutions often fail?

One of the main reasons that I personally think people don't keep their resolutions: they're simply not enjoyable. They lack any sense of joie de vivre. Take a look at what some of the most popular New Year's resolutions are: improving fitness, improving finances and improving mental health. Nothing that exactly makes you—or at least me—particularly excited. All of it feels kind of blah, for lack of a better word.

Life isn't supposed to be a slow, miserable trudge through completing tasks and doing what you're "supposed to do" until you, eventually, die. It's supposed to be joyous and wonderous—filled with laughter, love and adventure.

That is not to say that everything in life has to be enjoyable. Sometimes it's necessary to do difficult or unpleasant things because they're important or good things to do. Taking care of yourself isn't always fun or easy, but it's worth it in the long run.

However, an important part of taking care of yourself, that I'm afraid we often overlook in our increasingly toxic wellness, beauty and health-obsessed culture, is happiness. Life isn't supposed to be a slow, miserable trudge through completing tasks and doing what you're "supposed to do" until you, eventually, die. It's supposed to be joyous and wonderous—filled with laughter, love and adventure.

So why do we so often try so hard to make ourselves miserable? We focus on the most banal, mundane aspects of life just because it's what we're supposed to be doing. Why don't we try to make our new year's resolutions more joy-centric? More whimsical? Even the most boring aspects of day-to-day life can become a little bit more joyful if you try.

This year, I encourage you to set goals and resolutions that help you find the joy and fun in life. If that means exercising more, great. If that means focusing on a hobby that makes you happy, perfect. If that means spending more time with friends, wonderful. Or, if that just means having a silly little side-quest-type goal like petting as many dogs as possible, that works too. Just make sure you're having fun.

As for me, I've been having a hard time pinpointing exactly where my goals for this year lie. I guess, I've been a bit paralyzed by the potentiality of it all, but I know a couple of things are true. I want to smile more often, read everything I can get my hands on, finally learn how to ride a bike and continue to search for the joy and magic in the everyday. I hope that I am successful in these efforts, and I hope that you, reader, are successful and happy in this upcoming year as well.

Notes on a liminal campus

By DREW ROBERTS.



King Quad. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

You don't need a time machine and a bus ticket to Bethel, New York to go to Woodstock. No, that sensory overload is just a few hours away.

This past November, I found myself in Auburn, Alabama for the most important event in the Heart of Dixie: The Iron Bowl. It was a lot of things, but it was certainly not quiet. Fans clad in orange and blue scowled at those in crimson and white. Divided tailgates served as the microcosm for a storied rivalry that asks any new Alabamian to pick a side. Amidst all the commotion, there I was, feeling both alienated and convicted in the fact that I chose a school where none of this would happen.

Comparing Montevallo with a school ten times its size may seem pointless. After all, people come here for a small school experience. How often do we tout our small class sizes, student-to-faculty ratio and any number of selling points Mavens know by heart? It's worth noting, however, the stark contrast in college experience other college students may have in the same state as you. I'm not talking about day-to-day life or the number of dining options on campus. I'm asking a simple question: What does your school look like on the weekends?

Most Montevallo students are from central Alabama, meaning they most likely go home for the weekend. This is fairly evident when looking at the abundance of parking spaces that become magically available every Friday afternoon. I, however, am a native Mobilian. If I want to go home, I have to travel three and a half hours and pass more than 200 exits. This means I stay on campus 95% of the time, and, after four years of this, I wouldn't have it any other way.

To those unfamiliar with how Montevallo is on the weekend, I'll paint a picture. Each quad is desolate, absent of anyone save those walking to the caf. The caf itself is populated exclusively by those returning from church and a few other holdovers sitting alone. A study session on King Quad is free from the abrasive roar of a leaf blower or lawn mower. In the winter, with a grey sky and gentle fog, there's an almost purgatorial quality to campus. If you play your cards right, you can go an entire day without speaking to someone.

Why do I hold this in such high regard? For a simple reason, our world is loud. In a 2003 interview, the late David Foster Wallace, acclaimed author of "Infinite Jest," said, "There's an almost dread that comes up, I think, here about having to be alone and having to be quiet, and you see that. When you walk into most public spaces in America it isn't quiet anymore. They pipe music through, and the music is really easy to make fun of [because] it's usually really horrible music, but it seems significant that we don't want things to be quiet, ever, anymore."

As we enter this new semester, treat each weekend not as an occasion of boredom, but an avenue for creativity and reflection.

Though in this instance he's talking about reading, I think it can easily be applied to the college experience. Let's go back to Auburn for a second. The Iron Bowl is not the only time I've been there. Over the years, I've visited the Plains fairly regularly, and what has struck me is the staggering number of things to do there. Yet, what follows this feeling is a sense of claustrophobia, despite how big the campus and town are. This isn't limited exclusively to Auburn, however. Even at Montevallo, how often do we accompany our walk to class with a carefully curated Spotify playlist? How often do we have our necks craned downward, distracting ourselves with phones?

I don't want to sound like a curmudgeon, nor do I want to bash bigger schools. People who go there are getting the college experience they paid for. I would, however, like to encourage anyone reading this to look at the gift you've been given by attending the University of Montevallo. There are few places as silent and serene, poetic and pure as our empty campus. When the bricks are free of footsteps, Montevallo truly shines.

As we enter this new semester, treat each weekend not as an occasion of boredom, but an avenue for creativity and reflection. Embrace the ennui. Let's not all do it at once, though. The last thing I want is a crowd.

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What we watched over break

By DREW ROBERTS and CARTER JAMES.



Promotional material for "Fargo," "Dogville," "Mud," "Maestro," "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," "Anatomy of a Fall," "Andrei Rublev" and "How to Blow up a Pipeline."

"Fargo"

By Drew Roberts

If a movie has snow, it's a Christmas movie, right? Well, maybe not, but that doesn't stop me from watching "Fargo" around this time every year. A crime caper equal parts brutal and hilarious, the Coen Brothers' 1996 masterpiece is unlike any other movie out there. Behind all the bizarre violence and Minnesotan accents is one of the greatest screenplays of all time and a phenomenal performance from Frances McDormand. This film's brilliance lies in its ability to subvert your expectations throughout the entire run time. You don't need me to tell you that "Fargo" is a classic. Just know that if you haven't seen this, you're missing out.

"Dogville"

By Carter James

This was my introduction to the Danish provocateur, Lars von Trier. What an intro. "Dogville" takes you to the town of the same name, but all we see are minimal set decorations, chalk indicating houses and buildings and a giant soundstage. Even with this, and the fact it's shot like an episode of "The Office," the dread of the film sets in immediately. We see the darkest of humanity in the smallest of places, and our hope in others slowly ebbs away. Nicole Kidman gives one of the best performances I've ever seen, piercing me with her razor-sharp eyes. Every last minute of this three-hour experiment is more disturbing than the last. I can't wait to watch von Trier's entire filmography 9/10

"Mud"

By Drew Roberts

Starring Matthew McConaughey as he was beginning to reinvent himself, Jeff Nichols's 2012 film "Mud" is more than alright, alright, alright. In fact, it's great. This had been in my "yeah I'll probably watch that at some point" list for quite a while, but I couldn't have predicted the movie I was walking into. This is a textured, naturalistic and beautiful coming-of-age film with emotional depth and gripping characters. While McConaughey embodies a larger-than-life ethos, similar to Paul Newman in "Cool Hand Luke," its main character Ellis, played by Tye Sheridan, carries the film. We see the world romanticized through his eyes, which makes the inevitable clash with reality all the more devastating. Tackling themes of domestic strife, love, innocence and redemption, "Mud" is a starkly American tale, and one more people need to see.

"Maestro"

By Carter James

What an interesting case of ambition. Writer, director, and star Bradley Cooper wants an Oscar so bad he's practically on his hands and knees begging for it. I would be on his side if Bradley Cooper the writer was not in the way of Bradley Cooper the director and star. Here we have gorgeous cinematography, "go big or go home" direction and some good-great performances, but devoid of feeling. For a film about Leonard Bernstein, music is the last thing this film cares about. These vignettes into Bernstein's turbulent marriage and esteemed career amount to next to nothing when we never get to sit with the myriad of emotions on screen. It's damning that so much talent is visible on the screen but an attempt for greater depth and connection is rarely made. 5/10

"The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes"

By Drew Roberts

Like a phoenix–or mockingjay–rising from the ashes, my Hunger Games obsession has been reborn. This newest installment in the franchise tackles the origin of Coriolanus Snow, the tyrannical dictator of Panem in the original films. While the film relies on Tom Blyth's haunting performance to carry it, the rest stumbles in its pacing and characterization. Without giving too much away, the film's structure is odd, almost feeling like two films sandwiched together. This may have worked better on the page, but since I haven't read the novel, I can only guess. My other main issue is Lucy Gray Baird, played by Rachel Zegler. She seemed underwritten. What made Katniss so effective as a symbol in the original films was how close we were able to get to her character. Lucy Gray kept me at arm's length when I only wanted to learn more. I get that it's Snow's movie, but I do sense a missed opportunity there. Either way, I had a good time and would gladly march my way to the theater for another Hunger Games film.

"Anatomy of a Fall"

By Carter James

This courtroom drama from France in as engrossing as it is emotional. We see nearly 20 years of a woman's life picked apart after the death of her husband. This isn't a simple proving the accused is innocent story, but an examination of culpability and the uncomfortable truths we must face. Saundra Hüller gives a deeply human performance and Milo Machado-Graner has a bright future ahead of him as an actor. If I haven't convinced you enough, there's a dog that out acts everyone. 8.5/10

"Andrei Rublev"

By Drew Roberts

I know a three-hour black-and-white film about a Russian painter doesn't seem like the most thrilling thing in the world, but Andrei Tarkovsky's 1966 masterpiece "Andrei Rublev" is too good to stay quiet about. Full of violence and some brief nudity, it's not your typical religious film. It wades deep in the murky waters of the human heart and asks tough questions about the nature of art and suffering. It's full of hopelessness and despair, but also great beauty. If you're looking for a one-of-a-kind cinematic experience or just want to impress people at a dinner party, don't skip "Andrei Rublev."

"How to Blow up a Pipeline"

By Carter James

This simplistic thriller follows the literal and personal stakes involved in this bold act of eco-terrorism. You'll find nails to bite because the vast ways that everything can go wrong makes this endlessly tense. What makes this more impactful is that we aren't following professionals or seasoned criminals, but young adults that are sick of the world taking too much from them. This ragtag ensemble piece is elevated by how much energy first time director and co-writer, Daniel Goldhaber imbues into every 16mm frame. Star and co-writer, Ariela Barer, co-writer Jordan Sjol and Goldhaber are creative voices I look forward to hearing more from soon. 9/10

"Percy Jackson and the Olympians": Great for new and old fans

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

I've been a huge fan of Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" book series since 2014. I was 13 years old at the time, and I read all five books in the span of a week. In May 2020, I was on FaceTime with some friends and fellow fans of the series when Riordan announced that a television show based on the series had been approved for Disney+. After having my senior year of high school ruined by the COVID-19 pandemic, that news was a light in an otherwise lackluster summer.

The first two episodes of the series finally premiered on Disney+ on Dec. 19. I was delighted at how the first episode seemed to be a scene-for-scene rendition of the first few chapters of the first book, "The Lightning Thief." In this episode, we follow a 12-year-old Percy Jackson as he navigates the discovery that he is a demigod—the son of a human and a Greek god who, during the first episode, is unknown.

After getting expelled from school, Percy quickly learns from his mother, Sally, that his life up until this point has been a lie, and he is currently at risk of being hunted by monsters from a world of what he thought was simply mythology. After he, his mother and his best friend Grover are chased by a minotaur, his mother stays behind to protect him—presumably dying in the act—while Percy and Grover make it to Camp Half-Blood, which Grover describes as a safe place for demigods like Percy.

Episode two follows Percy as he navigates Camp Half-Blood, very quickly making both friends and enemies. He allies himself with Annabeth Chase, a daughter of Athena, and Luke Castellan, a son of Hermes, during a camp-wide game of capture the flag. Luke explains to him the ins and outs of camp, as well as the fact that children of the gods Zeus, Hades and Poseidon are referred to as "forbidden children," as the three gods made a pact to not have any more children with mortals. After Percy wins a fight with Clarisse, a daughter of Ares, his team subsequently wins the game of capture the flag which is immediately followed by Poseidon claiming Percy as his son, making him a forbidden child.

Episode three came out on Dec. 16, and, in my opinion, is the best episode so far. This episode sees Percy, Annabeth and Grover set out on a quest to find Zeus' missing lightning bolt—hence, the title of the first book, "The Lightning Thief." Prior to this, Percy was given a prophecy informing him that he would be betrayed during the course of the quest. Percy initially tries to keep this a secret from both Annabeth and Grover, but following a run-in with a fury and Medusa, chooses to tell them.

The third episode was the most divergent so far from the book, but I don't view this as a bad thing. I feel like the divergence helped increase the impact of the plot. I think that it's important for stories to be able to continue to grow and evolve, even after their initial publication. There's comfort in the knowledge that even the best stories have room to grow.

The casting for this series deserves as much praise as possible. Walker Scobell as Percy, Aryan Simhadri as Grover and Leah Sava Jeffries as Annabeth have amazing chemistry with each other both on and off-screen, and they do their characters justice in a way that I didn't know was possible.

Although I grew up with the "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" books, I think that the Disney+ series serves as a perfect piece of entertainment for both old and new fans alike. I watched the premiere of the series with one of my childhood friends—another long-time fan of the books—and his two younger siblings, who had little to no prior knowledge of the series.



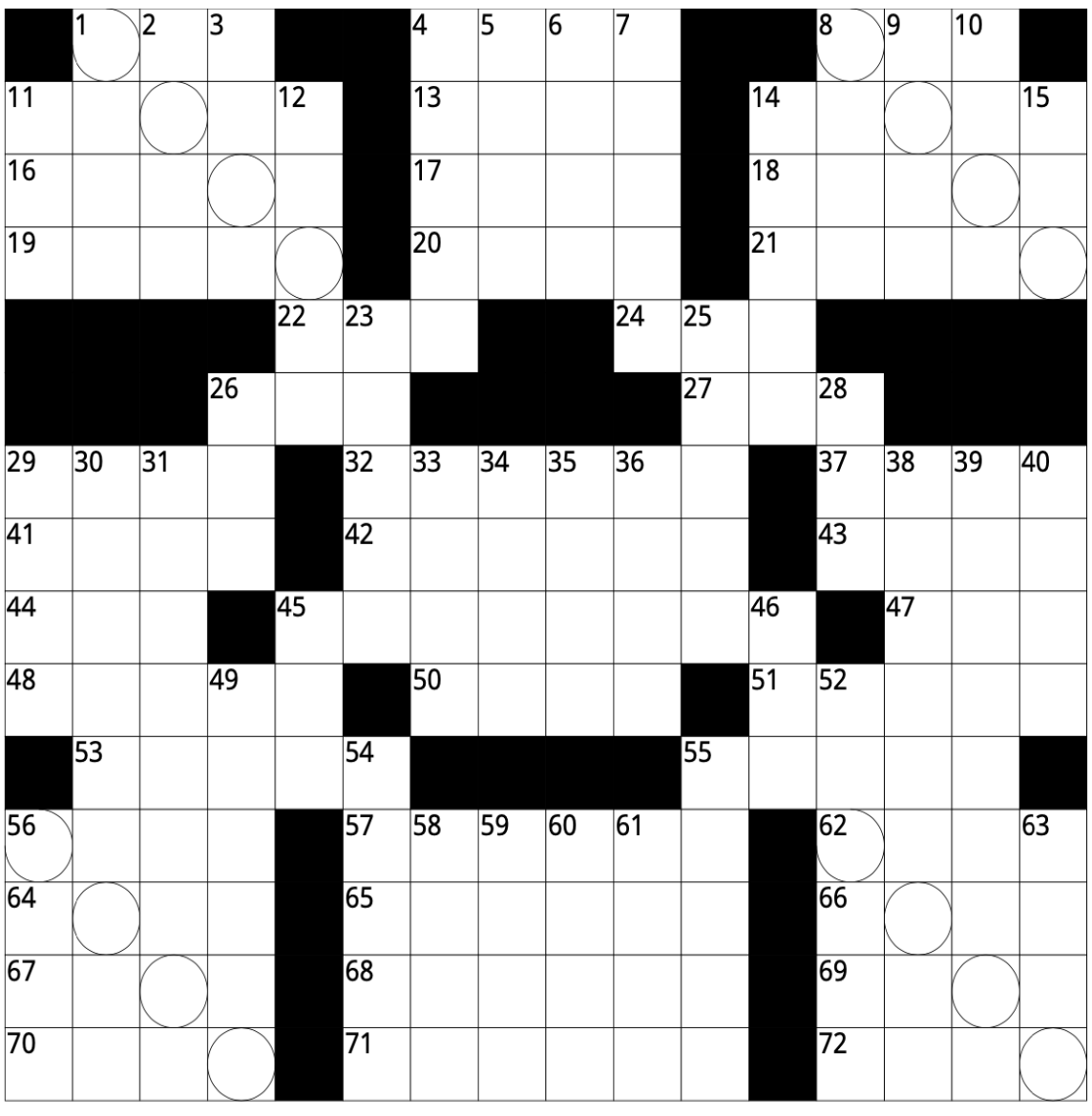
Promotional material for "Percy Jackson and the Olympians."

About halfway through, his youngest sibling said, "I think I like this show."

This statement reminded me of my thought process when I opened up the book "The Lightning Thief" for the first time in the eighth grade.

Crossword: Winter wonderland

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across

1. “Sprechen ___ Deutsch?”
4. Mazzy Star hit “____ Into You”
8. Short family member
11. Calendar page
13. Gaga or Godiva
14. T. rex or apatosaurus
16. Big name in foil
17. “Dies ____”
18. Emotionally distant
19. Ain’t gonna happen
20. “So Sick” singer
21. As of yet
22. Beer barrel
24. Small creatures in a fantasy novel
26. Govt. agent
27. “Iron Man” actor initialism
29. Palid
32. Enclose, as famously depicted in “The Cask of Amontillado”
37. Cries of discovery
41. Spiced tea
42. Poker declaration
43. Diamond corner
44. UN immigration agency
45. What’s depicted by the circled letters in this puzzle, and a phenomenon rarely experienced in Alabama
47. Zilch
48. Disney elephant
50. Small high school sport classification
51. Paper size
53. Tony of several Wong Kar-Wai films
55. Twitch
56. Stock abbr. of a Japanese-inspired clothing brand
57. Slowly, in music
62. “__ _’_ told”: rumor has it
64. Worldwide, abbr.
65. Jenny Holzer phrases
66. Feminizing suffix
67. Cry of great dismay
68. Puzzle
69. Langston Hughes poem
70. Hearty bowlful
71 Browser command
72. Swed. neighbor

Down

1. Go it alone
2. Foot part
3. Cameroonian soccer player Samuel
4. Brief affair
5. Swiss river
6. WWII turning point
7. ___ __ the storm
8. Farm tower
9. Privy to
10. “Go on…”
11. “Oh, brother!”
12. “Before Sunset” star Ethan
14. Went out with
15. Opposite of NSFW
23. NBC broadcaster Newman
25. Cosmetician Adrien
26. Brief lead-in to some intel
28. Quick punch
29. Opposite of 43-across
30. Not recommended
31. Foot condition with an unusual bend
33. Suffix with buck
34. Grassy expanse
35. Long sentence
36. Military insurance option
38. Keeps
39. Turkey’s place
40. Peddle
45. Mama’s boy
46. Corporate law abbr. denoting responsibility
49. Financial advice, usually accompanied with “Sell high”
52. Enter slowly
54. Many Twitch streamers
55. What a shame!”
56. Transgressions
58. Hamlet, for example
59. Leaf-to-branch connector
60. Data entry acronym
61. Fixin’ to
63. Catty remark

Scan for answers!



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:
It’s a new year, Aries, and that means it’s a new you—literally. Do you remember learning about cellular mitosis in biology? Well, that’s going to happen to you. By which I mean you are going to grow a new you. Treat them well.

Taurus:
I’m not going to lie, Taurus: January will be a terrible month for you. Maybe wallow in the icy bleakness of winter. Read some Russian literature. Sit outside and shiver in the cold. Maybe make a stew. Hide from predators. Whatever gets you in the winter spirit.

Gemini:
This is your sign to get into sports betting in 2024, Gemini. Show your commitment to this new hobby by betting your entire life savings on the outcome of this year’s Super Bowl. This is still a few weeks off, but you better start studying up on these play-off games if you don’t want this to go badly.

Cancer:
You will become the center of a campus-wide scandal this semester, Cancer. Make sure to start shredding documents now, lest this newspaper gets our hands on them.

Leo:
Get ready to be a star, Leo. A star of the small screen, that is, as you become a main cast member in the newest hit reality TV show, “The Real Housewives of Montevallo.” Hope you like getting into incredibly petty heated arguments and cutting up with your gals.

Virgo:
Virgo, you’ve been thinking a lot about your favorite dinosaur recently, haven’t you? Good job, keep it up.

Libra:
Are you feeling low energy this new year, Libra? May I suggest a big ol’ plate of spaghetti. It will give you strength and fortitude for the challenges that lie ahead.

Scorpio:
Focus in and tighten up, Scorpio. Cultivate your stony exterior. Be as boulder-like, tense and tight as possible. It will be the key to your success.

Sagittarius:
Sagittarius, be the opposite of Scorpio. Be very loose—loose as a goose, even. Cultivate your chill bro energy. You and Scorpio may have to fight, however, so be prepared for that. Keep just a little bit of an edge.

Capricorn:
You will eat one of the tastiest noodle soups you’ve ever had in your life this month, Capricorn. It’s called khao soi. Watch out if you have IBS, though.

Aquarius:
Watch “Scooby Doo,” Aquarius. Specifically, watch the live-action movie set on Spooky Island. It’s pretty good.

Pisces:
Get into shrimping this year, Pisces. Your water sign nature will make you a natural at navigating the seas and locating shrimp. Your bounties will be huge, your adventures numerous and your profits large.

The Alabamian

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Snow falls on Montevallo

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



King House. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.



Tree on campus. Photo by Drew Roberts.

It may have been far from a wonderland, but there was no denying winter had arrived in full force as snow and ice fell on Montevallo on the morning of Jan. 16.

Sub-freezing temperatures blanketed the state throughout the week, as the National Weather Service predicted the north and central parts of Alabama would experience some of their coldest temperatures in decades. Temperatures overnight between Jan. 16 and 17 reached the low teens and wind chill made it feel as though temperatures were in the single digits.

Ice and snow accumulations in Montevallo were noticeable, but minimal. Meanwhile, northern Alabama experienced the brunt of the winter weather—with cities in the northern part of the state reporting as much as seven inches of snow.

A request from Spire Gas Company, the company that provides natural gas services to the city of Montevallo, in addition to the winter weather, led the University of Montevallo to preemptively transition to virtual, e-learning days on Jan. 16 and 17 as a way to conserve the city's limited gas supply. These e-learning days came after another weather-related closure the previous Friday, Jan. 12 as classes were cancelled due to the threat of severe weather.

The university returned to normal operations on Jan. 18 as campus thawed out. Nevertheless, the weather remained chilly—with high temperatures topping out in the mid-40s and lows remaining in the teens for the remainder of the week.



Snow and ice covered bench. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.



University Lake. Photo by Drew Roberts.



Main Quad. Photo by Nethan Crew.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Letter from the editor: I suck

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Throughout my life, I have been known to be somewhat of a perfectionist.

This is not a label I would necessarily apply to myself, as I am too committed to the bit of trying to delude myself into believing that I am a relaxed and easygoing person, but even I must admit that those who level it against me have some points. So, needing to be good at everything I do all of the time makes me a perfectionist now? I'm not sure if I'm buying into that.

Sarcasm and attempts at self-delusion aside, I have to admit that I have a problem. I am a bit of perfectionist, and it is a bit of a problem sometimes.

Now, I'll be the first to avow the virtues of perfectionism. Why would I not want to try to be the best I can be all the time? Is it wrong to strive for greatness? But, I think it's necessary for all of us, myself included, to realize that perhaps perfectionism has a time and a place, and that, perhaps, well enough is good.

Let me put this anecdotally: I've owned a guitar since I was 18—a wonderful birthday gift from my parents. I love music and I could already play a couple of instruments by the time I was gifted my guitar. That was nearly four years ago now.

I love playing my guitar, it makes me genuinely very happy when I spend some time learning a new song. But, every time I sit down to play, I can't shake this deep-seated sense of embarrassment that sours one of my favorite activities like a bad taste in my mouth. There's always a little nagging voice in the back of my head that seems to be saying, "Why are you so bad at this? Why do you keep trying?"

I try to ignore these feelings and thoughts as much as I can, but, needless to say, it can all be a bit discouraging. As much as I hate to say it, there have definitely been times that I've avoided playing guitar because of these thought patterns.

But, I've realized it's necessary to ask myself: What are the stakes here?

At the end of the day, there are no stakes to me being actually good at guitar, but there are effects and consequences of not playing at all. I'll never get better if I avoid playing, of course, but also, when I don't play or get overly critical when I do play, I cheat myself out of enjoying a hobby and having fun. Four years is a not insignificant amount of time—how much of that time have I spent feeling bad about doing something that I actually like doing?

I need to learn how to embrace sucking at things. There are probably countless activities and experiences that I've cheated myself out of just because I've been afraid of looking silly or being bad at them. And, I have to stop myself and ask, for what? To preserve my own delicate ego?

In my worldview, stagnation is the enemy of fulfillment—and the best friend and abettor of stagnation is fear. My fear of being not good at things leads me to stagnate, to only fall into the comfort of the familiar. My comfort is robbing me of so many opportunities. I think of all the things I've loved from afar—things like art and music—that I've often been too afraid to pursue and suddenly feel a lot of contempt for my own comfort. Maybe if I was more willing to be brave and suck at things, I would be a more fulfilled person.

I suck (at some things, sometimes), and that's okay. Being good at everything is overrated, anyways. It's time to embrace my suckiness.

"Mean Girls" isn't mean enough

By CARTER JAMES.

Did cancel culture get to Tina Fey?

This question isn't to say I'm trying to imbue culture war nonsense into my review, but things feel…off. I get changing offensive material for modern audiences, but, with "Mean Girls," the slate has been wiped clean. There have been far worse remakes in the world, especially in the past few years, but with the musical adaptation of "Mean Girls," the weird starts to outweigh the good.

Miraculously, the film is hilarious. It's crazy how sanitized it is, yet basically copies the original film's homework. I know I'm nostalgia-blinded, but no amount of nostalgia can take away the fact that it's a disservice we lost "boo you whore." What replaces this, and the many iconic moments, are the musical numbers, and that's an entirely different issue.

You can go crazy, fantastical, grand—that's the point of a musical—but the creative team went half measure instead. The music is fine. Not punchy, but not bad, just in the middle. They're good listens, but they could be great listens. The vocal performances are good, besides one massive exception. The choreography and visuals are mostly on autopilot. What's crazy is that there's 35 minutes of music in a nearly 2-hour musical.

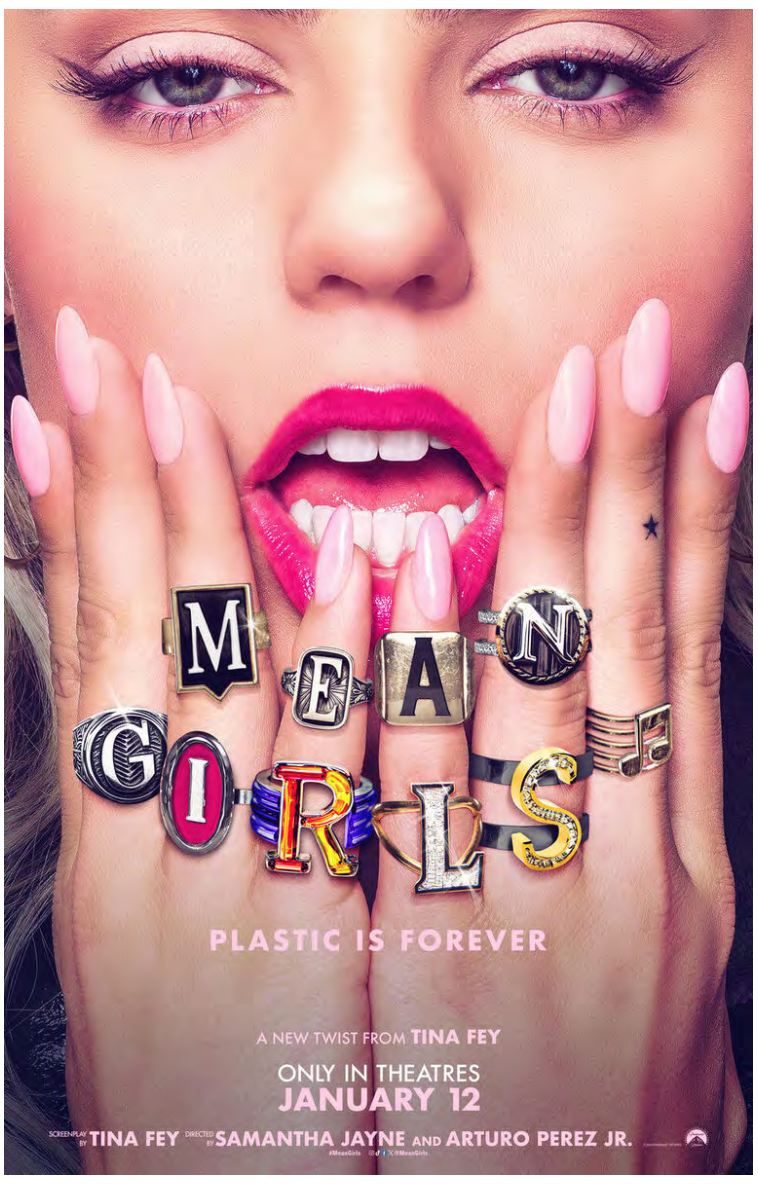
Where the film shines the most as a musical is when Regina George is singing. Renee Rapp is the best part of the film. Easily. She has the showstopping numbers, the most effort put into her songs and even the filmmaking takes a massive upgrade when she has a song. It's blatantly clear that this is a vehicle movie for her. They lean so heavily into putting her on a pedestal that the literal aspect ratio will change to 2.39:1, the one with black bars, when Rapp has her number.

Going back to the "one massive exception" in terms of vocal performances, Angourie Rice cannot sing. She's a great actor, and perfectly cast for a modern-day Cady Heron, but we're getting Emma Watson in "Beauty in the Beast" levels of bad, which is more disappointing when her co-stars are singing circles around her.

The supporting cast is crazy good. Auli'i Cravalho delivers as Janice. Jaquel Spicey is hilarious and impressive as Damian. Avantika and Bebe Wood are scene stealers as our favorite Plastics, Karen and Gretchen. Now, imagine if there was a real effort to deliver something different and fresh with a modern-day adaptation. All this talent starts to go to waste when you realize this is a toothless remake that overcorrects past mistakes.



Promotional material for "Mean Girls."



Promotional material for "Mean Girls."

Giving credit where credit is due, this movie doesn't fall into the Gen Z trap. What I call the Gen Z trap is where movies made for our generation rely too heavily on trends and social media to relate to us. Social media is used, but it's mostly realistic and natural. When it borders on ridiculousness, it's in the context of the ridiculous nature of North Shore High School. This is great because I would've audibly groaned if I were being pandered to.

With my many, many complaints about the weird nature of "Mean Girls," I had a ton of fun. Despite the odds, I laughed a ton. The musical numbers were enough to be fun. Rapp's Regina numbers are crazy, like you're watching another film. And maybe it's because I listened to the original cast recording after seeing this, but I enjoy the film soundtrack more, honestly. Even with what very little Fey gives her cast this time, it does not stop them for a moment.

"Mean Girls" runs on autopilot. The edgy charm is diluted into next to nothing. You could basically say it's almost the same film but watered down. With that, the movie is still quite fun. The passable and good enough musical numbers keep you engaged. The strong cast brings life where life shouldn't be. What's left of the comedy still works and works well. The clear attempt to make this a star vehicle for Rapp works incredibly well because this is her film. I know that "Mean Girls" would have to change for modern audiences, and needed to in some respects, but what was given is too much of a correction.

5.5/10

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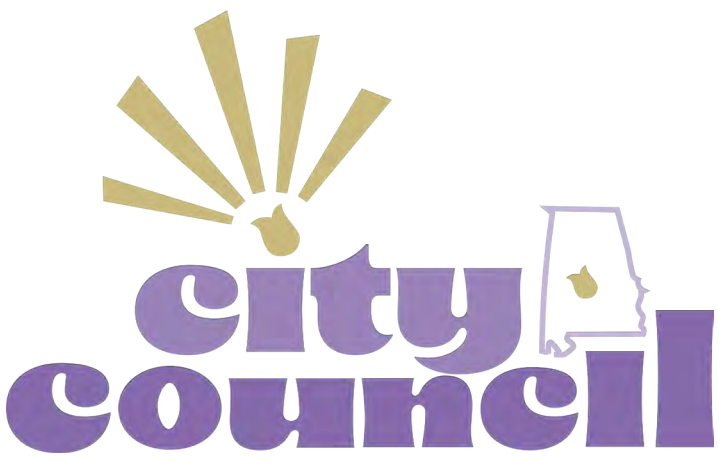
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Council talks fire finances and park repairs

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

A resolution seeking to establish a bank account for Montevallo Fire and Rescue was discussed and voted on at the Montevallo City Council's first meeting of 2024.

City Clerk Steve Gilbert read the resolution to the council at their Jan. 8 meeting. Gilbert said the purpose of the account was the purchasing of fire and medical equipment.

The resolution requested $100,000 be taken from the City of Montevallo capital reserve account to establish the Montevallo Fire and Rescue account. It also requested that $4,554 be added to the account per month until the council deems it necessary to rescind the resolution.

According to Gilbert, the monthly deposits are to make payments on Montevallo Fire and Rescue Engine 81, purchased by the department in 2023. Currently, this monthly amount is being taken from the capital reserve account, which may be used at the discretion of the council for Montevallo's general capital improvement.

Gilbert said the new account would be to ensure money is set aside for the financing of the engine and potential future fire and rescue vehicles.

Regarding the establishment of the account, Gilbert said, "What we want to do is earmark these funds to be solely for the purpose of fire and rescue and medical equipment and that amount not be within the entire capital reserve account."

The council voted to approve the resolution.

The council also discussed a recommendation to accept a $10,000 grant from The Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission to repave the city's tennis courts.

Montevallo Mayor Rusty Nix said the total cost of the repairs would be $24,000, with the remaining $14,000 after the grant expected to be paid by the Montevallo Development Cooperative District. The council voted to accept the grant.

The council also voted to allow MDCD access to the remaining repair funds alongside an additional $17,500 requested by MDCD to repair the roofs of two pavilions and the gazebo at Orr Park.

Nix read a proclamation for the recognition of Alabama Human Trafficking Awareness Month, recognized in January by the state since 2011.

Reading from the proclamation, Nix said, "The first step in eliminating human trafficking in our community is education. We must work diligently to ensure that all front line industries, educators, first responders and parents are aware of this issue—know how to spot it, know how to report it."

Jamie Willet, the Community Engagement and Awareness Chair of End It Alabama, a division of the Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force, was present at the meeting and thanked Nix for his proclamation.

Sarah Hogan, director of IMPACT Montevallo, the city's anti-drug coalition, announced the organization would be reapplying for a grant funding its operation. Current funding for the organization is set run out in September 2024.

Council member Leila Mitchell announced that Montevallo City Schools, The University of Montevallo and American Village would be closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Council member Kenneth Dukes announced that the Shelby County NAACP's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day March would begin at 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 15. Dukes said that after the march down Main Street a program would be held in Montevallo Highschool's auditorium. Dukes said that vendors were welcome to set up at the school lobby during the event.

Dukes also announced that a musical tribute to Dr. King would be held at the Shelby County Arts Council the night of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, Jan. 22, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.

Spreading hope, courage and unity on MLK Day

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.



AKA packaging food boxes. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

Community members came together in Montevallo on Monday, Jan. 15 to march in celebration and remembrance of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The 20th annual Unity March was hosted by the Shelby County branch of the NAACP. Representatives from Divine 9 organizations, community service groups and the Montevallo City Council were present to take part in the celebrations.

The NAACP is the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, and was formed in 1909 with the goal to advance justice for the African American community.

The march began on Main Street and ended at Montevallo High School, where there was a program to celebrate the work of King and the Civil Rights Movement.

During the program, guests were able to enjoy a musical performance by the Unity March Choir, a prayer by Rev. Kenneth Dukes and greetings from Montevallo mayor, Rusty Nix. Civil rights and defense attorney Ashley N. Bell served as Grand Marshall for the march and was the guest speaker.

Bell is a Mobile, Ala. native, but now resides in Shelby County, where she founded A. Bell Law Firm, LLC., and is serving as the Municipal Court Judge. She is the Democratic nominee for Shelby County District Court Judge, Place 2, the criminal division, making her the first African American to run for judgeship in the county.

The theme of the event was "Living the Dream: It starts with Me- Spreading Hope, Courage, and Unity." Bell spoke about her journey to becoming a lawyer and the trials she faced in the process. She believes in encouraging our youth "because they are the future." Bell offered a theme of encouragement for the next generation to not give up on their dreams.

"We have to be tenacious about our dreams and aspirations," said Bell.

Bell commemorated Dr. King on his dedication to ending racial segregation and discrimination during the Civil Rights movement. Dr. King's service to his community inspired Bell to pursue a career where she would be able to initiate change and social justice.

"We are our ancestors' wildest dreams, we have to keep moving," said Bell.

Another theme of the program was encouraging voter registration and making your voice heard in your community. Tables were set up outside the event with resources to help people register to vote or gain their voting rights back.

To close out the program, there was an award ceremony to recognize the different organizations and community members for their service to different causes. Awards were presented for different events held throughout the county and money raised for various causes and program initiatives.

One of the main pillars of the Divine 9 organizations and the NAACP is serving their communities. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., collected food during the program as a part of their target for their 2022-2026 administration. The bags of food will be donated to local daycares and schools for students who struggle with food insecurity.



Spring sports schedule

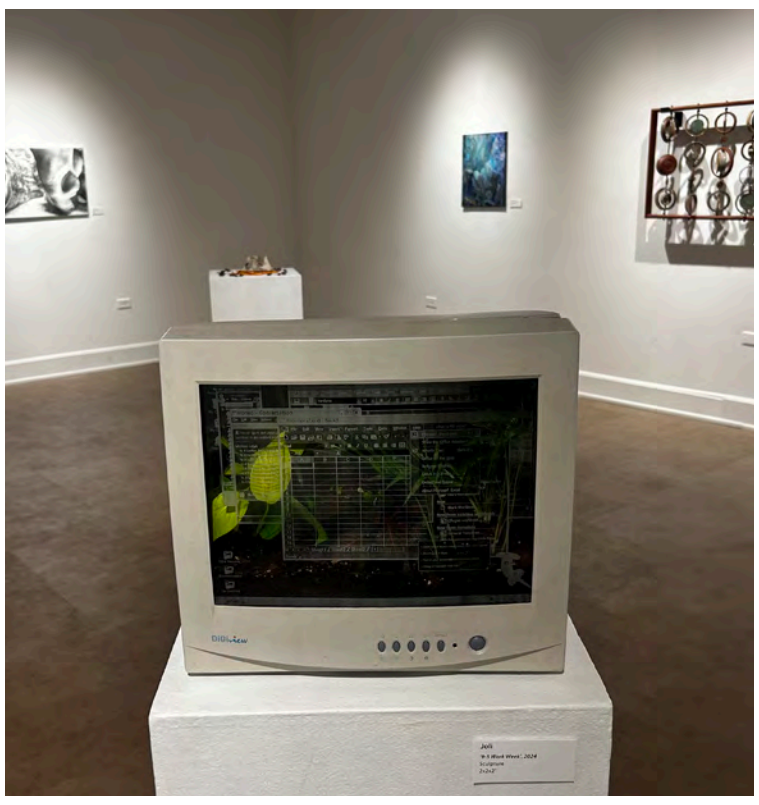
1/26	4:00 p.m.	Wrestling	at King University
1/27	1:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Lee University
1/27	3:00 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Lee University
1/30		Wrestling	vs. Huntingdon College
2/1	5:30 p.m.	Women's basketball	vs. Delta State
2/1	7:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	vs. Delta State
2/2	2:00 p.m.	Softball	at University of Tampa
2/2	2:00 p.m.	Baseball	at Embry-Riddle University
2/2	4:00 p.m.	Softball	at University of Tampa
2/3		Wrestling	at Greyhound Duals (Indianapolis, Ind.)
2/3	10:00 a.m.	Men's and women's tennis	vs. Tuskegee University
2/3	11:00 a.m	Women's lacrosse	vs. Embry-Riddle University
2/3	12:00 p.m.	Softball	at Eckerd College
2/3	2:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	vs. Mississippi College
2/3	2:00 p.m.	Softball	at Eckerd College
2/3	2:00 p.m.	Men's and women's tennis	vs. Tuskegee University
2/3	3:00 p.m.	Baseball	at Rollins College
2/3	4:00 p.m.	Men's basketball	vs. Mississippi College
2/4		Wrestling	Greyhound Open (Indianapolis, Ind.)
2/4	10:00 a.m.	Baseball	at Embry-Riddle University
2/4	12:00 p.m.	Softball	at Florida Southern College
2/4	12:00 p.m.	Men's lacrosse	vs. University of Indianapolis
2/4	2:00 p.m.	Softball	at Florida Southern College
2/6	3:00 p.m.	Baseball	at Spring Hill College
2/6	5:00 p.m.	Wrestling	at Lander University
2/6	7:00 p.m.	Wrestling	at Emmanuel University
2/8	4:30 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Shorter University
2/8	6:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Shorter University
2/9	1:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Trevecca Nazarene University (Charger Chillout Tournament, Huntsville, Ala.)
2/9	3:30 p.m.	Softball	vs. Young Harris College (Charger Chillout Tournament, Huntsville, Ala.)
2/9	4:00 p.m.	Women's lacrosse	vs. North Greenville University
2/10	12:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Carson-Newman University (Charger Chillout Tournament, Huntsville, Ala.)
2/10	12:00 p.m.	Men's lacrosse	at Florida Southern College
2/10	12:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. University of Virginia Wise
2/10	2:30 p.m.	Softball	vs. Georgia Southwestern State University (Charger Chillout Tournament, Huntsville, Ala.)
2/10	3:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. University of Virginia Wise
2/11	11:00 a.m	Women's lacrosse	vs. Rollins College
2/11	12:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. University of Virginia Wise
2/13	1:00 p.m.	Men's and women's tennis	at Alabama State University
2/13	4:00 p.m.	Baseball	at University of West Alabama
2/15		Men's and women's track	at Gulf South Conference Indoor Championship (Birmingham, Ala.)
2/15	5:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Christian Brothers University
2/15	7:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Christian Brothers University
2/16		Men's and women's track	at Gulf South Conference Indoor Championship (Birmingham, Ala.)
2/16		Men's and women's tennis	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/16	2:00 p.m.	Softball	at Spring Hill College
2/16	2:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Northwood University
2/16	5:00 p.m.	Women's lacrosse	at Belmont Abbey College
2/17		Men's and women's tennis	vs. Rhodes College
2/17		Wrestling	at Conference Carolinas Championship
2/17	12:00 p.m.	Men's baseball	vs. Northwood University
2/17	12:00 p.m.	Softball	at Spring Hill College
2/17	2:00 p.m.	Softball	at Spring Hill College
2/17	2:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	at Union University
2/17	4:00 p.m.	Men's basketball	at Union University
2/18		Wrestling	at Conference Carolinas Championship
2/18	11:00 a.m	Women's lacrosse	at Limestone University
2/18	12:00 p.m.	Men's lacrosse	vs. Tusculum University
2/18	12:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Northwood University
2/20		Men's and women's swimming	at New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (Cleveland, Miss.)
2/20	3:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Georgia Southwestern State University
2/20	5:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Georgia Southwestern State University
2/21		Men's and women's swimming	at New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (Cleveland, Miss.)
2/22		Men's and women's swimming	at New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (Cleveland, Miss.)
2/22	5:30 p.m.	Women's basketball	vs. Valdosta State University
2/22	7:30 p.m.	Men's basketball	vs. Valdosta State University
2/23		Men's and women's swimming	at New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (Cleveland, Miss.)
2/23	2:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/23	4:00 p.m.	Men's lacrosse	vs. Mars Hill University
2/24		Men's and women's swimming	at New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (Cleveland, Miss.)
2/24	12:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/24	1:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/24	1:00 p.m.	Men's and women's tennis	at Delta State University
2/24	2:00 p.m.	Women's basketball	vs. University of West Florida
2/24	3:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/24	3:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/24	4:00 p.m.	Men's basketball	vs. University of West Florida
2/25	11:00 a.m	Women's lacrosse	vs. SCAD- Savannah
2/25	12:00 p.m.	Softball	vs. Christian Brothers University
2/27	3:00 p.m.	Baseball	vs. Georgia Southwestern State University
2/28	6:00 p.m.	Women's lacrosse	at Birmingham-Southern College
2/29	6:00 p.m.	Men's lacrosse	at Embry-Riddle University
3/1	5:00 p.m.	Softball	at Delta State University
3/1	5:00 p.m.	Baseball	at Delta State University

Students emerge in “Interconnections”

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.



Students and professors at “Inteconnections.” Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.



Installation. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

The art exhibition “Interconnections” opened in the Gallery at Bloch Hall on Jan.11. The exhibition was curated by art major Madison L’Hoste as a part of the Emerging Curators Program.

According to the University of Montevallo’s website, “Students in the Art Department’s Emerging Curators Program work closely with a faculty mentor to organize and manage all aspects of an exhibition of their design, including communication with the artists, production, promotion, curation, and installation.”

This was L’Hoste’s first time curating an exhibit.

“It was a great opportunity to learn about curating skills and about the art department itself,” L’Hoste said. “I’ve learned a lot about curating skills, installation, the process of talking with other artists and networking.”

L’Hoste chose the theme “Interconnections” for her exhibit because she felt the concept would create a cohesive environment for the different mediums that she wanted to be included.

“It was a really clear way for me to bring different artists into one room and kind of congeal all of our aesthetics. Each person brought their own perspective on connection,” L’Hoste said.

The exhibit includes work from UM art students Isabella Ratliff, Sam Arnold, Olivia Dean, Joli, Kailyn Opperud, Pam Paez, Kara Theart, Leana L’Hoste and Madison L’Hoste.

“Interconnections” provided some students the chance to see their work in an exhibit for the first time. This was true for sophomore Olivia Dean.

“I’m so excited. It’s so surreal to see a piece of mine up on a wall. It feels like my art career is really starting,” Dean said.

Although the exhibit opened at the start of the semester, the initial planning for it began at the end of the fall semester.

L’Hoste explained that, before any work was installed, it took a couple of months to contact everyone involved and discuss what would be included in the gallery.

“Once that happened, it only took a month or less for the actual pieces to be chosen,” L’Hoste said.

The installation of the exhibit only took a few days.

“Madison texted me around the end of last year and said that she was holding an exhibit for beginning artists, and she asked me if I wanted to put a piece in. We’ve been putting up the pieces for about a week now. I took Madison’s painting and designed the posters. All of us kind of came together to help Madison put this whole thing together, and it looks great,” Dean said.

The exhibit will be on display in the Gallery at Bloch Hall until Feb. 2. The gallery is open on Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.



Gallery wall. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.



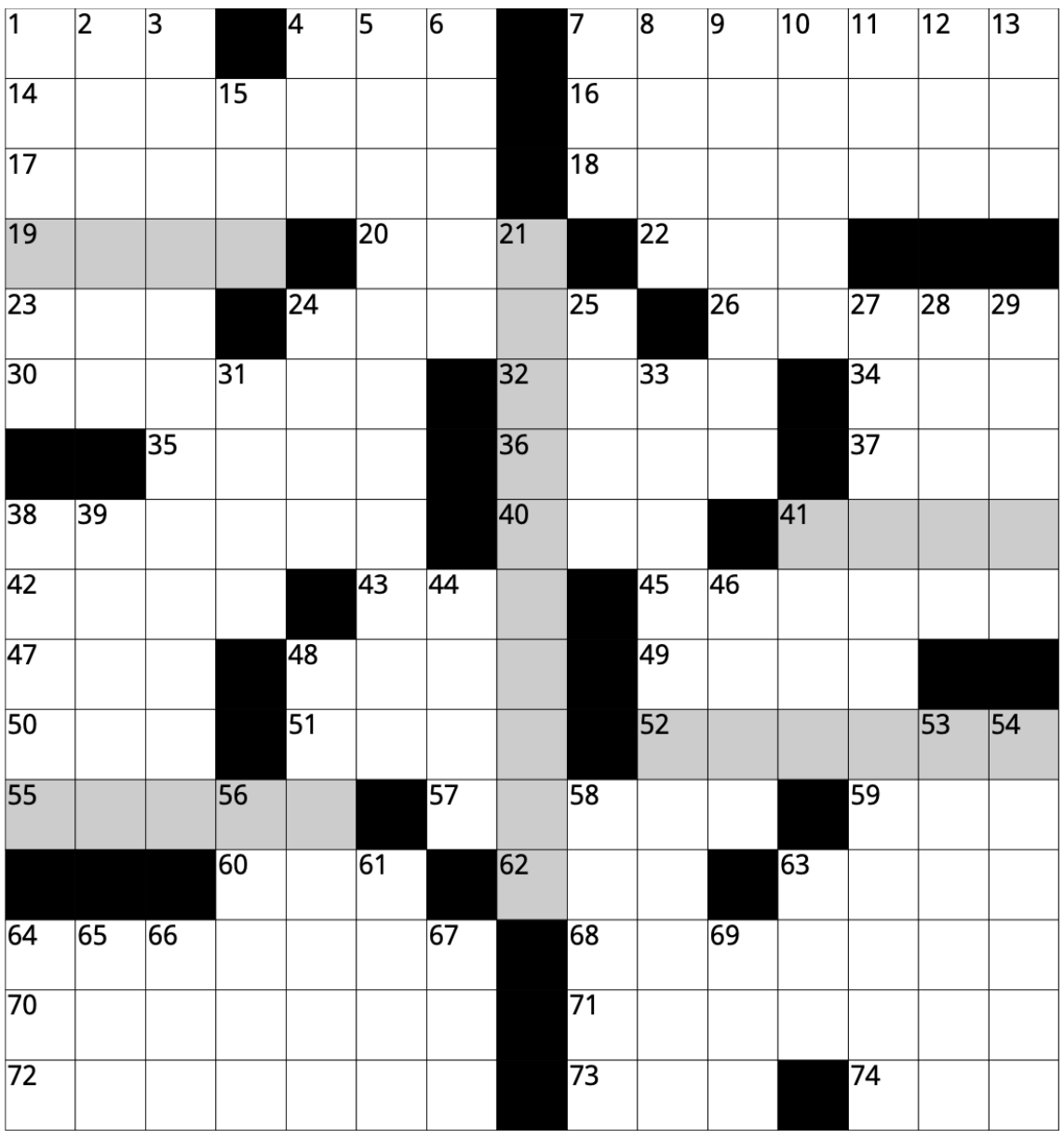
Gallery wall. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

College Night Schedule

Jan. 20- Esports tournament, 2 p.m.
Jan. 24- Tickets on sale for current faculty, staff and students
Jan. 25- Sign raising, 6 p.m.
Jan. 26- Tickets on sale for general public
Jan. 27- Women’s volleyball, 2 p.m.
Feb. 3- Ultimate frisbee, 2 p.m.
Feb. 4- Women’s basketball, 2 p.m.
Feb. 16- College Night productions, 7 p.m.
Feb. 17- Men’s basketball, 1 p.m.
Feb. 17- College Night productions, 7 p.m.

Crosswords: Bug boys

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Class of medications replaced SSRIs
4. In the style of
7. Jewish day of rest
14. Southwestern spreads
16. Feast again, perhaps
17. Holy smoke
18. Generated
19. Singer Denver
20. Bit of ink
22. Schtick
23. "Mr. Blue Sky" group, for short
24. Essential parts
26. Sexist, say
30. Big game fish
32. Building additions
34. Abbr. name of four NASA satellites
35. Friends
36. Ring event
37. Regal London-based orchestra, for short
38. Keep time, in a way
40. Humpty Dumpty, for example
41. Art partner
42. Goofs
43. Castle in the Miyazaki prefecture
45. Thunberg and Gerwig
47. Beast of burden
48. "Law and Order: SVU" co-star
49. Musicians Guthrie or Parks
50. Tic-tac-toe winner
51. Authentic
52. "Seinfeld" friend
55. Musical Starr
57. Suggested, for short
59. "You've got mail" co.
60. Boxing div.
62. Took a load off
63. Editor's mark
64. How some characterize dadaism
68. Mob family member
70. Handheld tool with concentrated warmth
71. Narcissist's vacation
72. Common breakfast in a shell
73. Sugar suffix
74. From _ __ Z

Down:

1. 727, for example
2. Cooking oil option
3. News host
4. Philip of "Kung Fu"
5. "Danger, Will Robinson!" series
6. "Save me _ ____!"
7. Yearbook sect.
8. Liver infection, for short
9. Opposed to
10. Greet ceremoniously
11. Eye color on a driver's license
12. Mature
13. Turner or Lasso
15. 100 yrs.
21. Group formed by the highlighted answers
24. Silent star Negri
25. Trudge
27. Repetitive WWII film
28. _____ New Guinea
29. Loses enthusiasm
31. Butter servings
33. Bag ids
38. Morning flight question: "___ __ coffee?"
39. "__ __ _ thought!": exclamation when you're wrong
41. Lead in to -ton
44. 365 days
46. Way one might describe roses in a text
48. Period in human development
53. ____ __ alone
54. 1970 Jodorowsky western
56. Southern side
58. Small part
61. Sedate
63. Dog command
64. Spa sigh
65. Formerly
66. Light brown
67. "Star Trek" sequel, for short
69. Enemy

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:
Pay extra attention to Groundhog Day this year, Aries. If Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow this year, run.

Taurus:
Meditate on the ouroboros, Taurus. Not just because it rhymes, but because unhinging your jaw and trying to eat your feet could be a cool thing to do.

Gemini:
It's cold out, Gemini. Dress accordingly and pack a snack. Let your car defrost before you start driving, and make sure you drip your faucet. Unless, it's warm by the time you're reading this. In which case, ignore this.

Cancer:
Get your Teddy Roosevelt on, Cancer. Hold a beloved stuffed animal in your arms, lest a very large bear hold you.

Leo:
Cook a big, heaping plate of rice, Leo. Yummy, yummy rice.

Virgo:
Virgo, chop up some sausage to go in Leo's rice. I personally like cheddar jalapeno sausage best. What is your favorite?

Libra:
Explore your love of alliteration, Libra. Become a libertarian leprechaun in Lichtenstein.

Scorpio:
Scorpio, your days are numbered. Take this however you will. Maybe you're about to fall through an open manhole cover. Maybe we just mean your calendar. It's up for interpretation.

Sagittarius:
Sagittarius, did you use to live in my apartment? Do you currently live in the state of Florida? If so, please update your billing address so I stop getting your toll road enforcement invoice every week. Many thanks from Wesley Walter of The Alabamian.

Capricorn:
May I compare thee to a summer's day, Capricorn? No, it's still cold when you're reading this, probably. If it isn't, may I suggest picking up the newest issue of The Alabamian because this one is old.

Aquarius:
Remove your head, Aquarius, and look at what's inside. You won't be surprised to find it's full of cereal. Keep doing you, girl.

Pisces:
Get back inside your place of dwelling, Pisces. Crack open a jar of delicious Peter Pan peanut butter and fire up "Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3."



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.



The Alabamian

Vol. 98, No. 11 | The Purple and Gold in Black and White | MONDAY, February 05, 2024

Sides unveil College Night signs

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.



Purple Side's sign. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.



Gold Side's sign. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

The 2024 College Night season is officially in full swing after a string of opening events that took place Jan. 27. Following a pep rally and Gold Side win in the annual College Night volleyball game, each side unveiled their side signs outside of Farmer Hall.

The unveiling of the 2024 signs began with a welcome message from SGA president Colton Rodano and student trustee Aubrie Chastain along with chants and cheers from both Purple and Gold Side. With both sides gathered, adorned in their respective colors, the suspenseful moments preceding the unveilings began.

Purple Side leaders Josh Giles and Abby Sledd began the unveilings with the reveal of Purple Side's sign. The sign, which is interactive, includes a spinnable Ferris wheel with a painted face as its key feature. Also included are a palm reading booth and partially revealed tents covered with the side's colors and cow print. Behind the Ferris wheel lies a water tower that reads "Pleasant."

"We've been working very hard on the sign, especially the spinning mechanism for the Ferris wheel—that was something we really wanted and we really wanted to make happen. And, I think, it really kind of just made magic real, just the way that we were able to make it spin," said Sledd.

Giles added, "The sign made magic real for sure. So, you know, we're just very excited. It was a wonderful time—wonderful turnout."

Gold Side leaders Abi Dewilde and Anna Brasfield then unveiled Gold Side's sign. The sign is set in a columned cityscape with the moon, a starry sky and clouds hanging over the buildings depicted. A prominent clock tower is shown within the city and reads 6:00 while a columned building reminiscent of Reynolds Hall is marked with the letters "HA" on its front.

"There was a lot of collaboration and hard work put into the sign," said Brasfield. "We all worked really hard and love it so much. It honestly is the pillar of the season. Kind of starting out, it was the first thing we worked on together."

Dewilde added, "I am so excited! I'm just so happy that everyone gets to see it, you know, all of our hard work that we put into it. We have so many talented people that worked on this sign."

While each side's sign is available to see outside of Farmer Hall, you'll have to catch the shows to find out the full meaning of Purple Side's amusement scene and Gold Side's cityscape.

SLIDE gives creative collaboration space

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

UM students gathered in Alan and Lindsey Song Center for the Art's Black Box Theatre on Jan. 24 for a night of collaborative creative performances, including live light shows, drag, musical and poetry performances and tarot readings, all hosted by the Slide Art Collective.

SLIDE or Safe Laboratory for Improvisation and Development of Artistic Expression is the brainchild of senior theatre and art major Julia Jones and UM alumnae Josie Daisy.



JoAnn Crawford at SLIDE. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

The show consisted of both planned performances and artistic "playgrounds" in which attendees were given access to craft supplies, noisemakers and projection equipment to engage with freely.

SLIDE's first performance, which Daisy described as a "dress rehearsal," was held on Oct. 24, 2023.

Jones spoke on the importance of the black box theatre as a venue saying, "We wanted a space that encouraged, like, technical art and like art that can use technology, and we wanted a versatile space which is exactly what the black box theatre is, but we are hoping to expand to other spaces after this one."

Daisy said, "I was really excited about how the room that you host something in will change the environment of what happens. If you do a drag thing in Palmer, it's going to be different than the black box and I think also like the way that the seating arrangement is in the black box is more encouraging for the audience to feel like they're part of the show rather than like be observant."

Daisy said the initial idea for Slide came about when she and Jones attended a live show by the hyperpop duo 100 gecs.



Pipe cleaners and SLIDE logo. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Daisy said the show, "combined so many aspects of theatre and performance and music, and we were like Montevallo doesn't have anything like this."

Jones said the two also derived inspiration from past spaces in Montevallo such as Eclipse Coffee, where students were encouraged to congregate and share art.

Jones said that Eclipse provided an environment where students could, "Do open mic stuff, display their art in a creative and experimental way, but there's not that anymore."

Jones added, "I think also with COVID like people haven't been collaborating as much anymore. I noticed they don't get out of their spaces as much, so we were thinking it would be cool to combine different artists and help them meet each other and explore their mediums."

The collective's goals lie in not just promoting collaborative creative expression, but researching it as well. Jones is currently using the collective's performances at UM as undergraduate research.

"Through these performance nights that we host, we will survey the artists and the audience and that's the whole project, to find out their interests and their expression," Jones said, remarking that, "The art is the research, but also the artists are the research too."

While information about the performances will be relayed to UM's College of Fine Arts at the end of the semester, Daisy said researching collective artistic creation and how to set up a collaborative artistic laboratory is just as important to her personally.

Continue reading this article online.

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Letter from the editor: In defense of saccharinity

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Despite the fact that I'm a hard-boiled, serious student newspaper tsar and magnate, something about Valentine's Day just always gets to me.

If you've been reading my column at all this year—or have had the immense pleasure, I'm sure, of interacting with me in person around campus—you'll hopefully know that most of the lede is a joke. I cry pretty much on a weekly basis, I frequently worry that I'm an over-bearing, megalomaniac editor and would list "emotional," "afraid" and "way-too-emotionally-attached-to-2004-film-Before-Sunset" as some of the top descriptors for myself. But, all of that aside, it is very much true that I love Valentine's Day—it's my favorite holiday and, hands-down, my favorite day of the year.

Early on in my tenure at The Alabamian I wrote an opinion piece—my first ever, might I add—on my love of Valentine's Day. In preparation for writing this piece, I revisited it.

In this article, aptly titled, "In defense of Valentine's Day," I set out to argue against Valentine's Day's many detractors—those who claim it's a holiday invented to sell more cards, or that it solely works to uphold heteropatriarchal standards. I, instead, argue that Valentine's Day is what you make of it. It can be a day to celebrate your bond with friends, your relationship with a partner or just a day to eat chocolate. No matter what, it's a day to remember what makes you feel happy and loved and appreciate those things.

Three years have not changed my opinions on this matter very much. I still think love, in all its many forms, is what makes the world go around, and I still think Valentine's Day is a great day to remember this.

However, I noticed in re-reading this article that I seemed very intent on making people take Valentine's Day seriously by throwing notions of romanticism and big emotions under the bus. I even specifically took word space out in my article to caveat that I was not just writing about, "sappy, saccharine, romantic love that is packaged up and sold as a commodity in Valentine's Day themed ads," but that I meant, "real, true, genuine love," as if the two belong in mutually exclusive categories.

Reading this with fresh eyes made me question: what's wrong with a bit of saccharinity?

Not to get too "we live in a society" about this, but I feel as though we currently exist in a culture that is so hyper-nihilistic, meme-ified and irony-poisoned that to come across as anything other than aloof, nonchalant and somewhat distant is to debase yourself—let the better-than-thou mask we're supposed to sport at all times slip. I mean, you don't have to look further than the phenomenon of "cringe culture" to start believing that we culturally punish enthusiasm and passion. Earnestness is dead, long live sardonicism!

I suppose there is an argument to be made that it's not, but the way I see it, saccharinity is the rejection of this culture of playing it cool. Saccharinity is the state of being so sweet on something that you can't even be bothered to hide it. It's an expression of earnestness. And, while it is an expression of vulnerability akin to showing someone your soft underbelly, it's also a gift and a superpower insofar as it cuts through the noise of irony and nihilism to create a beam of genuine positivity, love and joy.

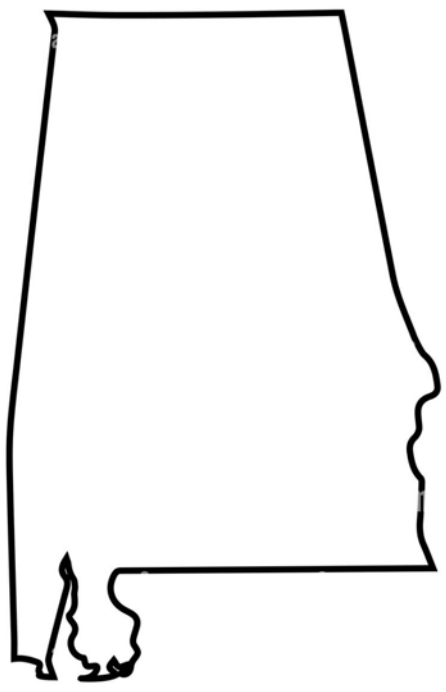
Now, I'm not saying everything has to be tooth-rottingly sweet all the time, but, often, I think we tend to be afraid of coming off too strongly than is warranted and, therefore, tend to come off as not very strong at all. Have you ever done something nice for someone, only to get nervous that they would think your actions were weird? I know I have. That's exactly the feeling I'm talking about here. Perhaps, if we worked on leaning into saccharinity, we would feel less abashed and embarrassed about our earnestness.

I feel as though the call to action in "In defense of Valentine's Day," was to make sure that you do something nice for yourself on Valentine's Day—something that makes you feel happy. I still stand by that call to action as well. Like I said in that article, Valentine's Day is what you make of it, so make it a good day for yourself.

My current-day addendum, though, is to also make sure you do something nice for someone else this Valentine's Day too. And, most importantly, don't be shy about it! The phrase "it's the thought that counts," really rings true here—no matter what gesture you make, big or small, make sure it's unmistakably clear that you were thinking of someone. Go forth and be saccharine!

Alabama is going backwards, again

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.



Being curious about the prospect of time travel, I assume, crosses everyone's mind at least once in their lifetime. And, while you might think that you need to acquire a tricked out DeLorean or other time travelling contraption, I can tell you right now that you don't, especially if you're thinking about traveling to the past.

Just visit the Alabama Department of Corrections.

On Jan. 25, Alabama performed the United States' first ever execution by way of nitrogen hypoxia. For those unfamiliar, nitrogen hypoxia is, essentially, the process of slowly suffocating under the inhalation of pure nitrogen.

Kenneth Eugene Smith, who was convicted of murdering Elizabeth Dorlene Sennett in 1988, initially received the death penalty. In 1992, however, an appeal modified his sentence to life without parole. Then, in 1996, Smith again received the death penalty.

So, having sat on death row for 36 years, on and off, Smith finally received what lawmakers initially wanted for him.

If sitting on death row for almost 40 years isn't wild enough for you—because in the United States, that prospect is not unusually uncommon—this was not the first attempt to execute Smith. In 2022, he survived an attempt at lethal injection, due to an unsuccessful without a successful vein placement. The execution was called off and Smith was put back on death row.

Alabama has a history of botched executions, and Smith was not the first to go through it. Out of nine recorded failed executions across the country, Alabama is responsible for four of them—one being Smith's. Alabama's solution? Spend funding that could be used for public education or infrastructure on experimental methods of execution.

Now, I could go on and on about my thoughts and feelings toward death row, capital punishment and American prisons in general, but this specific execution sets Alabama and the rest of the country back by decades. And, despite the United Nations' involvement and a disappointing "go ahead" from the Supreme Court, the execution moved forward.

Preceding Smith's execution, predictions were made as to what would happen to a person when inhaling pure nitrogen, and with even the most high-up lawmakers stating that it would be safe, effective and painless, the proof of these claims is limited.

In fact, The American Veterinary Medical Association even warns about using this method on animals, as it has not been proven to be a humane method of euthanasia. Before the animal goes unconscious, there are clear signs of distress.

Kay Ivey, governor of Alabama, actually has a dog. Her name is Missy, and as stated on governor.alabama.gov, "Missy is a testament to how new opportunities are possible when people care." I can't imagine that this apparently beloved dog, who has her own page on Ivey's website, would undergo nitrogen hypoxia by preference if she were to be euthanized. So why are we doing this to people?

Our state is very pro-capital punishment, but when we begin to not get it right every single time, new methods are considered instead of abolishing the death penalty and focusing on the rehabilitation of inmates.

So, our new solution is nitrogen hypoxia. An untested, widely experimental and torturous method. Predictions of what would happen during the execution were made by the Alabama Attorney General's Office, but real accounts described by Smith's spiritual advisor Rev. Jeff Hood, who remained by Smith's side during the execution, proved to be very different.

In a short wrap-up of the predictions made, it was concluded that once the face mask delivering pure nitrogen was strapped to Smith's face, it would take seconds for Smith to go unconscious and just a few minutes to actually die. It was also predicted that the process would be painless, humane and essentially unfelt.

None of these things happened. In Hood's personal account of the execution, Smith held his breath for as long as he could, probably because he was scared out of his mind. It then took over 10 minutes for his breathing to noticeably disappear. During these 10 minutes, onlookers observed Smith shaking and writhing on the gurney while his eyes rolled into the back of his head. He was obviously in pain and the effects of the nitrogen were obviously felt.

Despite the execution going wildly different than predicted, Alabama is now encouraging other states to try this new method, still claiming that the procedure is humane and painless.

I've been following this story for a long time, and if you're not angry, you should be. This new method of execution is nothing but cruel and unusual.

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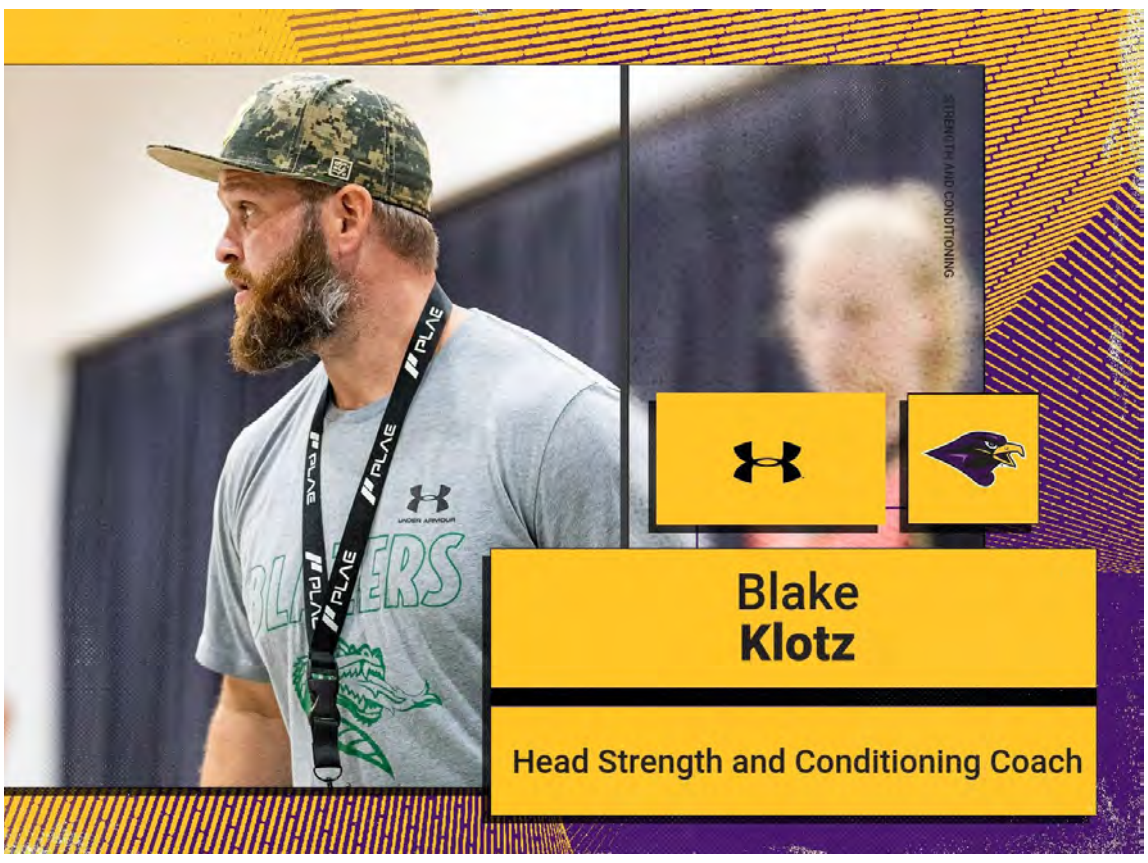
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Old Gym, new face

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



New strength coach, Blake Klotz. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics Department.

With the summer departure of Montevallo's first-ever strength and conditioning coach, Brad Bowen, the University's athletic department had to work fast. Who would replace someone who had made an impact on so many UM athletes' lives? It turned out they didn't have to look very far.

Blake Klotz was just 34 miles up the road, working as the Assistant Director of Athletic Performance for the University of Alabama-Birmingham's women's basketball team. He had spent 12 years at UAB strengthening various Blazer athletic programs, but Klotz's undergraduate degree had little to do with athletic performance.

"I went to school to be a zookeeper," he said. Klotz attended Murray State University in Murray, Ky. just 45 minutes away from his hometown in Illinois.

His passion for animals drove him to pursue a job as a zookeeper out of high school, earning a degree from Murray State in 2008. But, jobs were difficult to find, and he wasn't interested in moving to a major city.

So, it was back to the drawing board. Purely out of coincidence, shortly after graduation, Klotz met Murray State's strength coach and started volunteering in the mornings in the weight room.

He was also in a personal fitness journey of his own at that point in his life, and said those goals coincided with one another.

Klotz loved the community that helping out in the weight room gave him. "I was never a part of athletics when I was at Murray State, so then I was, and it was just really cool," he said.

His volunteering eventually led to an internship where Klotz found a new sense of purpose.

"I love being the center of attention, in a humble servant way." Coaching allowed him to be the life of the party, while getting eyes on him and helping athletes to gain a competitive edge.

There's a spectrum of interest in weightlifting in collegiate athletics. Some athletes love it significantly more than others, but "I always thought it was fun to think, 'Man, what if I can get 100% of buy-in and just have an awesome workout,'" said Klotz.

Once the internship was up, Klotz knew for sure that strength coaching was something he wanted to continue doing. Klotz spent that spring emailing every Division I school in the country looking for a job opportunity. He sent "probably close to four hundred emails, and UAB called."

In the fall of 2011, he started a new role as a graduate assistant with the UAB strength and conditioning staff. At first, he was worried he had made the wrong decision.

"When I got to UAB, it was trying to find its way in a big landscape," said Klotz, "Everything was kind of old and run-down, and things just weren't like it was [at Murray State]."

But, he stuck it out and graduated with his master's degree in 2013, which turned out to be a pivotal year for him in his career.

UAB softball had gone to the super regional in the NCAA Softball Women's World Series, and Klotz had been coaching the team that year. "I was fortunate to be a part of that in kind of a small role," he explained.

"It springboarded my career," said Klotz, "after that, that summer UAB administration hired me on full-time."

He spent the next 10 years coaching various Blazer athletic teams, but in his last couple of years, he was looking for something more.

One thing he really appreciated about his job was helping young interns and strength coaches learn the craft and try to get their first job after spending time with him. He was also tired of the politics that come with being involved in athletics at a Division I institution.

So, when the UM position opened up over the summer, Klotz was contacted about an interview. He was hesitant at first.

"You do something for so long and you have a system, you kind of get nervous, but I was willing to take a leap of faith."

The interview immediately sealed it for him.

"I knew Montevallo was a place for me to go and grow as a person and as a strength coach."

He also felt that the Falcon athletic community was extremely special, and hadn't seen that anywhere else. "This one actually felt like other sports wanted to help other sports be successful," he said.

While the jump from Division I to Division II coaching isn't very common, Klotz has made an immediate impact on the program from Old Gym with his years of experience in the field.

"Regardless of the division, everybody wants to win," he said, "there's no difference there. There's championships here, there's championships there, and last time I checked, we're all trying to do that."

Pack the SAC

Photos by CARTER JAMES.



The man behind Main Street Tavern

By KENDALL MURRAY.



Main Street Tavern. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

Jeff Webster is the name not many Montevallo students know behind a place that every Montevallo student knows: Main Street Tavern.

Jeff Webster, owner of Montevallo's Main Street Tavern, a chef with more than 29 years of experience in the restaurant industry, lives in Chelsea with his wife and two children.

When Webster was in high school, he always wanted a job in the restaurant industry.

He initially started working as a dishwasher but worked his way up to executive chef at a restaurant called Dock of the Bay in his hometown of Kissimmee, Fla.

Webster attended culinary school in Birmingham at Culinard, and was a member of its first graduating class. While Culinard was new at the time, Webster gained valuable experience in some of the top restaurants in Birmingham.

"I went to culinary school and worked at some of the greatest restaurants in the Southeast. Mostly in Birmingham, because Birmingham has such a great restaurant scene. And then, you know, finally leaped to do it for ourselves," said Webster.

Webster spent 20 years working in the restaurant industry, where he gained inspiration from some of Birmingham's top chefs, before he decided he wanted to open his own restaurant.

"I think somewhere in every person that's been in the restaurant business, they always want to own their restaurant. And so my wife and I always had in the back of our minds that we wanted a place of our own. And so luckily, you know, Montevallo gave us that opportunity and afforded us the effort because Montevallo is welcoming," said Webster.

With the help of his wife, his dream of owning a restaurant became a reality when he and his wife found the perfect opportunity in Montevallo.

Webster and his wife Misty renovated the space of an old bus station in downtown Montevallo on Main Street and opened Main Street Tavern in 2009. The Tavern quickly became a local favorite in Montevallo and Webster is both proud to call The Tavern home and excited to see what the future holds.

"The Tavern aims to create a welcoming atmosphere where people can enjoy a delicious meal and make lasting memories around the dining table," said Webster.

Webster also owns and operates Station 31 Kitchen, a restaurant in Chelsea, where he renovated an abandoned fire station and turned it into a restaurant.

As he reflected on the success of their restaurant in Montevallo, Webster said, "We are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the Montevallo community and to witness the magic that happens when people gather around the dining table. The support and warmth we receive from our customers make every day special, and it's their presence that truly brings the restaurant to life."

"The people are fantastic here. The restaurant business is all about memories being made over dinner over a dining room table. And so we get to see that every night of the week. You know what I mean? And that and it's the people that make the magic. We are so happy to be there. And that's what makes it so special. It's the people," said Webster.



Need V Day inspo? Here are some local date ideas

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief; LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor; SAMANTHA COST, Business manager; and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Roommate date

By Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief

Roommates, by nature, already spend a lot of time together, so why should you carve out time in your schedules to go on a roommate date? But think about it this way: who do you need to remind that you love them more than someone you literally live with? A great, simple roommate date is to go have a sunset picnic at University Lake. Your picnic can be as high or low effort as you both want it to be. Just make sure it's tasty and fun.

Pet the goats at Oak Mountain State Park

By Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor

The petting zoo at Oak Mountain is one of my favorite things located between Montevallo and Birmingham. If you know me, you know that I love animals—specifically the goats at the Oak Mountain Petting Zoo (except for Scooter—I have it out for you, Scooter). However, Scooter aside, the petting zoo is a perfect date idea. You get to see animals, including goats, peacocks, horses, donkeys, chickens and pigs, and you can also (sometimes, dependent on the weather) feed them! So, spend a day at Oak Mountain, get outside and share your Valentine's Day with your valentine and the goats. Just, again, beware of Scooter.

Love and pizza

By Samantha Cost, Business manager

Nothing screams I love you more than pizza. If you are looking to take out your long-term partner or are in need of a first-date location, Slice is the ideal spot. To start, the menu has a lot of different options (even if your date doesn't like pizza). The atmosphere is nice and even has overhead string lights that really add a romantic atmosphere to the place. Whether you like sitting indoors or outdoors, Slice has options for both. However, the best part is that you can pay for both you and your date using flex points!

Go back to your roots

By Wesley Walter, Managing editor

My mother ingrained in me a deep distrust for Valentine's Day I am still trying to shake. Despite this, and working too much, she still made time to take me and my sister to Target every year to buy Valentine's for my classmates—all of them, mind you, because everyone knows you have to bring something for the whole class, lest your teacher steal your precious Pixie Stix and temporary tattoos. This year for Valentine's, I suggest you do something similar. If you don't feel like getting knick-knacks for everyone in one of your classes, maybe do it for everyone in your nearest convenience store. Maybe just throw a wad of cash in the air in a crowded place. Regardless just try giving small tokens of your love to a large number of acquaintances.



“Love is all around”: My guide to Valentine’s Day



By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

With New Years in the rearview and spring fast approaching, the dreaded by some and loved by others Valentine’s Day is upon us again. Whether you are in a committed relationship, single or somewhere in-between, here is my guide on how to make the most of your Valentine’s Day.

There is more to this ambivalent holiday than Dove chocolates and stuffed teddy bears. Instead of focusing on elaborate gestures and buying gifts, focus on celebrating the love around you, romantic or platonic.

For those of you who will be spending the holiday with someone you love, remember that it is okay to celebrate your relationship from home. I recommend cooking together. Don’t be afraid to try a recipe that poses a challenge, take this chance to learn a new skill together.

If having to wash dishes completely ruins the romance for you, order your favorite takeout and play a card game that challenges you to learn more about your partner. I suggest “We’re Not Really Strangers; Couples Edition.”

Fighting the Valentine’s Day crowds would be an act of love, so if you are willing to brave the chaos, I suggest trying something new. You might stumble upon your new favorite restaurant and a new tradition.

If you are going to be spending Valentine’s with your friends this year, having a Galentine’s-themed dinner party is, personally, my favorite way to celebrate the occasion. Order in or cook your favorite meal and curl up on the couch with your friends and a good rom-com. Can I recommend “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days?”

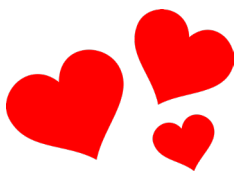
Small gestures oftentimes mean the most. My best friend handmakes me a card for my birthday every year, and they are my favorite over any card from the store. The idea of taking the time to handmake or write something for one specific person is a sweet gesture that money can’t buy.

At the end of the day, it does not matter if you are going out, staying in, spending the day with a partner or with your friends. Valentine’s Day is all about celebrating the love in your life, in any shape or form. Call your mom, pet your dog and literally stop and smell the roses.

A perfect quote for Valentines Day comes from the movie “Love Actually.”

“If you look for it, I’ve got a sneaky feeling that love actually is all around.”

Valentine’s Day Spotify playlist:







Photos from SLIDE

Photos by WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor. Edited by JOSIE DAISY.

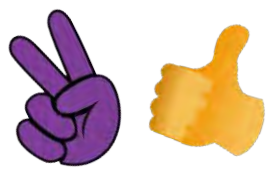








Photos from sign raising



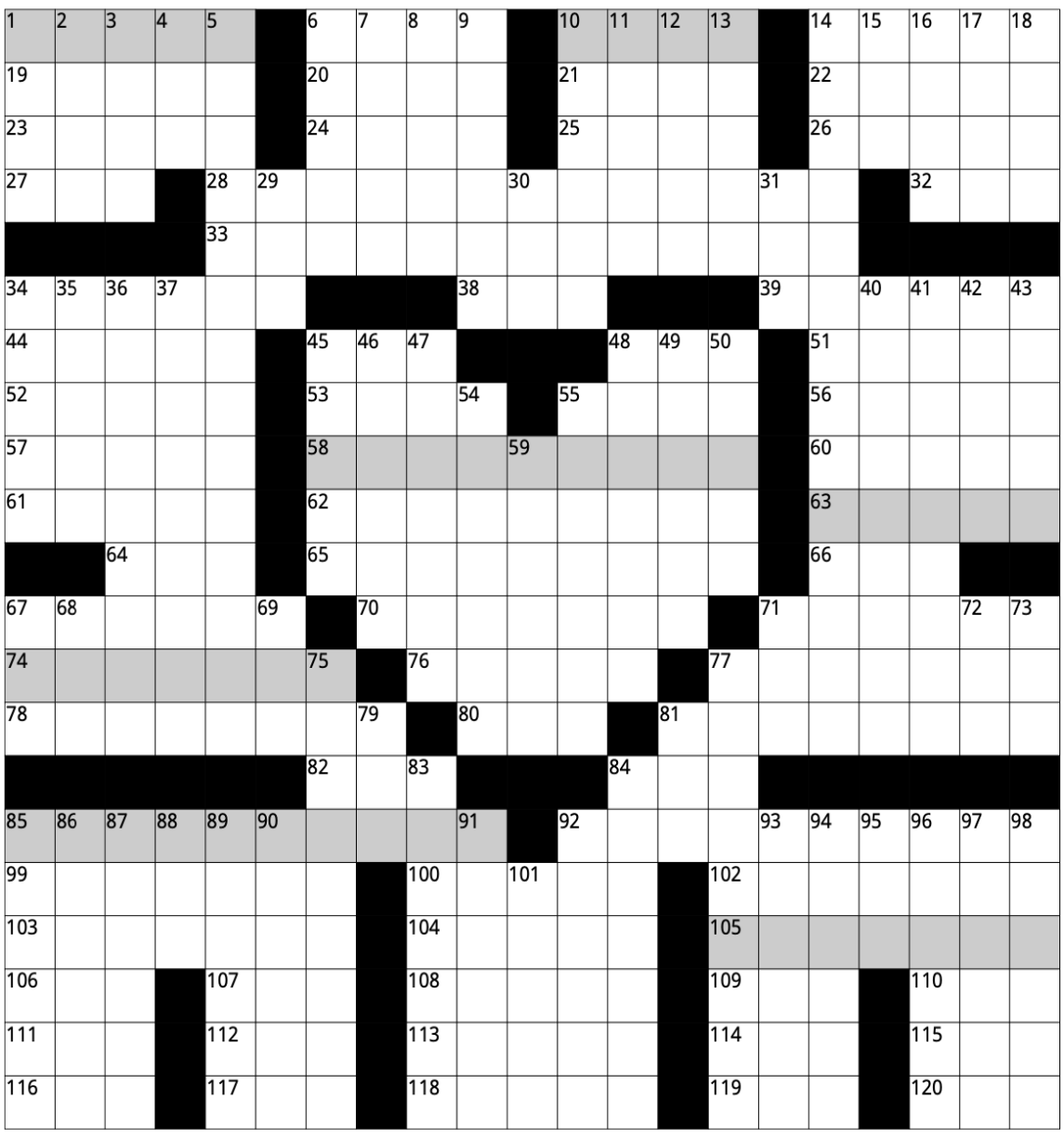
Photos by LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.





Crossword

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Bee product
6. Body mod surgeries popularized by the Kardashians
10. Zero, in tennis
14. Nilla product
19. Cancel
20. Dig like a pig
21. Retailer of Kallax and Billy shelves
22. Laughing scavenger
23. Panko-breaded chicken dish
24. Deets
25. Links numbers
26. Blood line
27. Fruity drinks suffix
28. Shared agreement
32. Univ. research granter
33. Carol with Latin lyrics
34. Deli hanger
38. Metabolism enzyme, abbr.
39. On the clock
44. Creepy crawler in Madrid
45. Lipstick retailer
48. German granny
51. Niall, previously of One Direction
52. Yosemite lake name
53. Pomegranate seed spice ____ dana
55. Zoomed
56. Used a dating app, say
57. Slangy way one might ask if you completed a task
58. Who the shaded answers might refer to
60. Pasta order, accompanied by al
61. Expression
62. Involved
63. One of Charlie's trio
64. Worn-down pencil
65. Someone who suggests another for an award
66. Stats estimate measure
67. Result of no pain, at least according to a popular saying
70. More like a body of water south of Alabama, perhaps?
71. ____ __ of the Earth: an honest person
74. Quaint letter salutation
76. Blind parts
77. Has the most secrets
78. Church foyet
80. Cadillac version
81. PuT up get-out-of-jail money
82. Place for pampering
84. Outlaw
85. Like you, according to the title of a Bob Dylan track
92. Like an underdog in March Madness
99. Horn of Africa nation
100. Less risky
102. Like an annoying sibling
103. Makes jigsaw puzzles, perhaps
104. Greeting in your inbox
105. Warhol superstar Candy
106. Affliction that can be treated with cranberries, abbr.
107. Pou ___: vantage point
108. Like Thor
109. Comedian Wong
110. Keanu "Matrix" role
111. Pigeon sound
112. When repeated, an adventurous comic protagonist
113. Forever in Berlin
114. Perfect score
115. Corn unit
116. Abysmal grades
117. "You betcha!"
118. Gallagher family band
119. Lit. major
120. Mme., across the Pyrenees

Down:

1. Māori dance
2. OT book after Amos
3. Do, re or mi
4. Sounds of hesitation
5. Cuarón road trip movie
6. Shiny, in product names
7. Worker's reward
8. Like some yogurt
9. Like some kisses
10. Fat
11. "What about it?"
12. Song part
13. Artist's stand
14. "How much do I owe you?"
15. "Bottoms" star Edebiri
16. Plant with fronds
17. Tolkien tree creatures
18. Australian flyers, abbr.
29. Id. Number of medical devices
30. Chicken sandwich seller, for short
31. Teacher's org.
34. Persian poet Shirazi
35. Secret rival
36. Making a decision after deliberation
37. "Have we met?"
40. 70s movement
41. Steeped citrusy drink
42. Potato variety
43. Prepare to propose
45. Expert
46. Like a clock with hands
47. Namesake plant of a Walt Whitman poem cluster
48. Poppy products
49. Yoda, for one
50. Doe follower, in a song
54. Charges again
55. Some are dire
59. Opposite of whole
67. Confidentiality doc
68. Wine study prefix
69. Intelligence org.
71. Bag, in some brand names
72. Former Atlanta Falcons defensive end Umenyiora
73. Luminance measure, abbr.
75. Times when shows premiere
77. Like Reese Witherspoon's character in "Election"
79. Clean air org.
81. Fellow
83. Hall of fame
84. Swift follower, perhaps
85. Beguile
86. Lead in to habeas corpus or certiorari
87. "Old MacDonald" syllables
88. And so on, abbr.
89. Dependable
90. Poet Jones or director Macdonald
91. Puget Sound city
92. Lannister matriarch in "Game of Thrones"
93. Big Sur retreat
94. Eager
95. British soccer group, abbr.
96. Hockey player Erkki and model Jo Jo, to name a few
97. Straight
98. Wool variety
101. Rural spreads

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief, and WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries: Your heart is mine, Aries. Literally. Your Valentine's will be some real "Tell Tale Heart" content.

Taurus: Embrace your namesake, Taurus. The key to love rests in the ignition of a new Ford Taurus sitting on 40s. Make sure to hit up your nearest used car lot, ASAP.

Gemini: Make sure to clear out your browser tabs, Gemini. The weight of your Wikipedia research is a heavy burden to bear. Freeing yourself from it will make your heart soar like an eagle, or at least a moth or very high-jumping frog.

Cancer: Do you smell that, Cancer? It's the smell of a warm, fresh, delicious Captain D's meal. Go to the nearest D's with great haste or there will be Hell to pay.

Leo: Oooh, what is this? A new smell? That's right, Leo. It's none other than the delicious stench of a Long John Silver's. If you need fast food fish on what will, undoubtedly, be a lonely Valentine's; make sure it's Long John Silver's.

Virgo: Lean into your marsupial tendencies, Virgo. Get a pouch. Maybe store your young in it.

Libra: Let loose this Valentine's Day, Libra. Let loose a swarm of butterflies in the club.

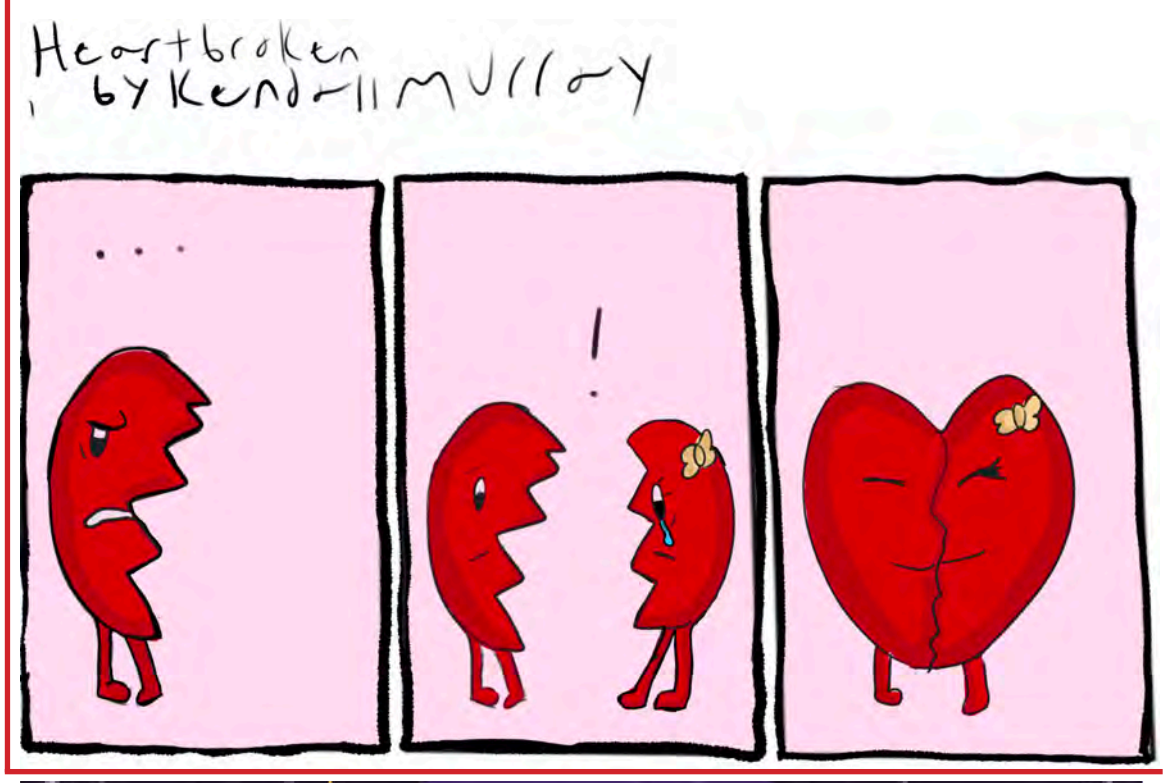
Scorpio: Have you been neglecting your podiatric health, Scorpio? Quit it. Get rid of that ingrown toenail and you will be swimming in suitors this Valentine's.

Sagittarius: Have you heard of Nero and Sporus, Sagittarius? If not, Google them. You might learn some fun historical facts about your next relationship.

Capricorn: All I can say about this Valentine's Day for you, Capricorn... Just wait for the discount chocolate on Feb. 15.

Aquarius: For you, Aquarius, love is in the...bear? Get your frontiersman on with a new bearskin jacket.

Pisces: Horoscopes? More like I'm so darn bored I can't cope. I don't know, Pisces. Do whatever. I see February as a perfect month for you in every conceivable fashion.





Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

COLLEGE NIGHT EDITION

The Alabamian

Vol. 98, No. 12 | The Purple and Gold in Black and White | SATURDAY, February 17, 2024

GOLD VICTORY!



THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR ONE MORE GOLD!

Gold Side cast. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Gold Side lives!

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Scene from Gold Side's show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Gold Side's "To Live and Die" follows two gods, Moros, the god of death, and Elsya, the god of life, who are sent to Earth on a quest to find Ordea, the god of order.

Opening on Eterna, the realm of the gods, the gods introduce themselves through the song "To Live and to Die." The audience is introduced to Chroana, the god of time, and Intuvius, the god of intuition, as well as Moros and Elysa.

As the song ends, Chroana speaks to Intuvius and tells him that she can sense Moros and Elsya have become restless. She has a plan to combat this—a plan that will require Intuvius's help.

Meanwhile, Moros and Elsya discuss how they've become disenchanted with their roles. Elsya is tired of making new lives just for them to end and Moros is tired of ending them.

The pair sings the song, "Our Purpose," before Chroana enters. After Elsya threatens to quit, Chroana reveals that she is sending her and Moros to the human realm to find Ordea—a god who was once the ruler of Eterna, but who left. The pair has eight hours to locate her, in a mission Chroana says will help them understand their purpose.

In the human realm, a girl, Olive, is being helped into bed by her brother, Jack, and two friends, Rowan and Quinn, after being released from the hospital following a heart transplant. Jack is still worried about Olive, and sets up to spend the night in her room.

After Rowan and Quinn leave, Olive goes to sleep. While Olive is sleeping, Jack pleads with the universe to let Olive be okay after her surgery.

After Jack falls asleep, Moros and Elsya appear. A yellow orb, Olive's soul, rises from her body. Olive has died and it's Moros's job to take her soul back to Eterna. Since they are on a timed mission, and do not have time to go back to Eterna, Elsya shoves Olive's soul back into her body—giving her life again.

Olive sits up, gasping for air, and wakes Jack up. The two notice Moros and Elsya and demand to know who they are. Moros and Elsya introduce themselves as gods, but Olive and Jack do not believe them. To prove it, Moros removes Olive's soul and Elsya puts it back in.

Both Olive and Jack believe that Moros and Elsya are gods now. The two gods explain that they're trying to find Ordea through the song "What We Gotta Do." Olive and Jack decide to help them with their mission.



Scene from Gold Side's show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Together, they go to a marketplace where Rowan is working. Olive introduces Moros and Elsya to her, and the two show her a photo of Ordea. Rowan says that she's never seen her before, but suggests that they ask around.

Through the song, "The Place to Be," the gods ask different vendors at the market about Ordea, but nobody knows her.

Finally, they speak to a man—Intuvius in disguise—running a pretzel cart. He says he recognizes Ordea and tells them she goes by the name Gwenyth Vines. He suggests that the group go to the library, Heatherly Archives, to search the local records for more information.

The scene transitions back to Eterna, where Chroana announces to the gods of emotion that Moros and Elsya are busy with their mission. This causes a wide range of reactions and turmoil among the group of gods. Together, they sing "Not a Clue."

At Heatherly Archives, Olive, Jack, Moros and Elsya approach the librarian, who is Intuvius in disguise, and ask for information about Gwenyth Vines. The group searches local records while he goes in the backrooms to find more information. As the group searches, they sing "It'll be Alright."

The librarian returns as the song ends, telling them Gwenyth Vines owns Onyx, a nightclub. Olive is excited, saying that she and Quinn used to frequent that club.

At Onyx, the group asks the bartender—Intuvius in disguise—about Gwenyth. The bartender tells the group that Gwenyth is no longer the owner of Onyx. She now owns a nearby coffee shop.

Moros and Elsya get up to go find her, but Olive stops them. She encourages them to relax while they're at Onyx. Olive notices that Rowan and Quinn are also there, and the group gets drinks before dancing to the song "Cloud 9."

The scene transitions to Ordea's coffee shop. Olive and Jack leave Moros and Elsya to talk with her. Ordea prompts them to explain what has been bothering them. They tell her that they've lost motivation to do their tasks.

Ordea tells them about a time before life and death, where humans were immortal. Together, the gods sing the song "In Between," and come to the conclusion that life and death are necessary in defining humanity. Elsya and Moros decide that their purposes lie in helping humans find meaning.

Elsya and Moros return to Olive's bedroom. They tell Olive and Jack they're happy they got to share their adventure with them.

Chroana and Intuvius show up at the edge of the scene, and Chroana pauses time. Intuvius remarks that everyone looks happy, but he has a bad feeling. Chroana sends him off so she can speak to Elsya and Moros and unfreezes time for the two gods.

Chroana congratulates them on finishing their mission and asks if they found what they needed. The two gods confirm that they did and apologize for their earlier cynicism.

Chroana breaks the news that Olive's time is up, and that they must take her soul back to Eterna. Moros and Elsya protest against it, saying that they'll just put her soul back in her body again, but Chroana says that would upset the balance of life and death. Moros and Elsya sadly go to tell Olive and Jack.

Olive accepts that it is her time to go through the song, "Farewell." As the song ends, Olive lies back on her bed and her soul rises out of her body.

The scene transitions and Jack begins the song "Finale." It's been four months since Olive's passing. He says that he misses her, but is comforted by knowing her soul is in Eterna. He has realized his life will go on. The ensemble of gods gradually join in to sing about what it means to live and die.



Scene from Gold Side's show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

The Alabamian

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DISCLAIMER

These editorials are the opinion of The Alabamian staff and represent the views of their individual authors. These opinions do not neccessarily reflect the University of Montevallo student body, faculty, administration or Board of Trustees.

Alumni shout-outs

You mean for $20 I get to tell everyone how much I love Tiffany Bunt, Director of Alumni Affairs? PV!

Paul Tierney



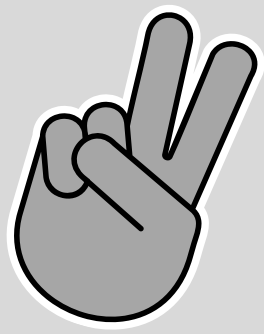
Fish loves you! You gave us an amazing show and did your talkin' UP ON STAGE. Enjoy every moment and MILK IT for all it's worth!

-Fish Bever



Alumni, thank you for allowing me to serve as your UMNAA President. I may bleed purple, but it's always an alumni victory!

Stephanie Shaw



Purple Victory to the side we all love so well.

Poof, Trummie



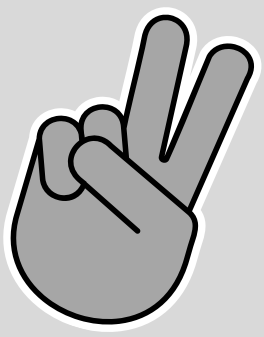
Tiffany and Laurel! We are so grateful for everything you do for the UMNAA. We hope you get some well-deserved rest next week.

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club



To ALL my Purplelicious Purples, I love you, I'm proud of you, and our Family will stand the test of time. PV!!

Portia Ann Mason-Harton
Purple Side 2007



CONGRATS to all 2023-2024 Purple graduates!! Now come hang out with Vintage Purples Alumni Club! vintagepurples.com

Kiwi



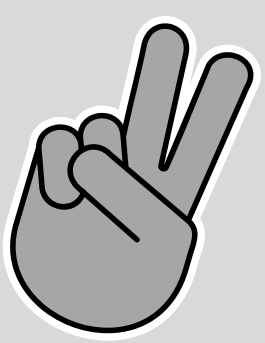
Love, love and more love to ALL my Purple Family: old & new, Vintages & Actives! Life is brighter because of YOU!

Kiwi



Dear Purple Side Seniors. As you begin to round out your final year at UM, remember that you will always have a place with VPAC. We greet you with open arms and our PVs held high!

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club



Congratulations to the Vintage Purples Alumni Club for receiving the University of Montevallo National Alumni Association's Volunteer Service Award.

Robert Brueggeman

Purple Side 2024 ~ We will ALWAYS be so very proud of you. What's It ALWAYS Gonna Be? A PV!

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club

Our Dearest Lizzbeth. The world is a better place because of the work you have done and continue to do every day. We are honored to call you our friend. With Love,

The Butts-Pruett Family

Purple Side,
Remember our blood is royalty!

Kathy Nelems, 1977

CONGRATS and PV to Madeline Drain-Dorsey for all the hard work and love you put into the Purple Side!! Love you!!

-Kerry Komai

THANK YOU to the Vintage Purples and Old Golds Alumni Clubs for your commitment to driving alumni engagement for the UMNAA.

Robert Brueggeman

PV 4-Ever!!

Cowtail Alum '74-'77

First year Purple Side members. You took a leap of faith. We Vintages are proud to see you grow and mature into the future leaders of this game. You brought it. Keep that same energy every day. The future is brighter because of you. PV to you!!!

Vintage Purples Alumni Club

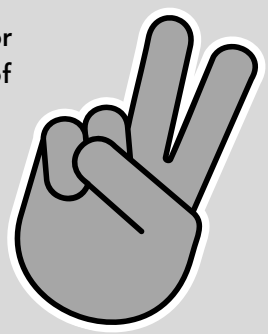
CONGRATULATIONS and SO MUCH LOVE to the GREEN SIDE, for another incredible Montevallo Homecoming season!!

Vintage Purples Alumni Club

Alumni shout-outs

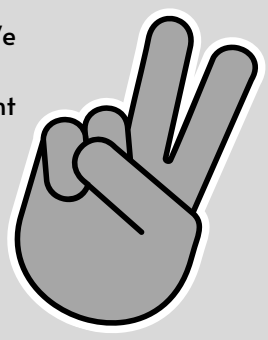
Stephanie Shaw! Thank you for your service as the President of the UMNAA. We are grateful for your dedication to the University of Montevallo.

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club



Dr. Elizabeth Gassel Perkins - We are incredibly proud of you for being recognized as the recipient of the 2024 Nathalie Molton Gibbons Alumni Achievement Award.

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club



Marion Brown. Words will never be enough, but I'll try. You are the absolute sweetest person I've ever met. Thank you for teaching me the game. I wouldn't have school pride and love without you. Love you always!!

Carlton Hall '04



Palmer Staff, without you, the show could not go on. Thank you for taking care of both sides and this game time and time again.

The Purple Side & Vintage Purples Alumni Club



Thank you to the College Night Committee for your dedication to the game, the students, and the tradition that we all love so well.

The Purple Side & Vintage Purples Alumni Club



GET IN THE VAN!!!! (We've got stickers!) Seriously, Vintage Voyage is your DD tonight: 205-337-9925. PV!

Vintage Voyage



ALL MY LOVE to Tiffany & Laurel!!! You two are the real rock stars of College Night, and I love you!

Kiwi

I am so endlessly proud of every single Gold who played this season! I could feel your golden spirit from the other side of the country! You all keep this tradition going and make our side worth being on. I hope you soaked up every second because I definitely miss the game! GV yesterday, GV today, GV forever!!!!

Delaney Eaves- GV leader 2023

Be so proud of all you've accomplished this College Night season, and always remember to have fun! Laugh, cry, and enjoy every moment when you can- you"ll cherish these memories for years to come! GV always!!

Catherine Renda and Ryan Howard
2019 Gold Side Leaders

Happy 20th Anniversary to the PURPLES clean sweep in 2004. (Purple Victory, Ms. Montevallo: Kay Butts, Mr. Montevallo: Justin Murdock, and College Night Dedication: Don Alexander) The Winning Catchphrase = "It's About Damn Time."

spoken by Dr. Elizabeth Gassel Perkins 04'

Dear Kay. Thank you for your loyalty and guidance. Thank you for furthering the blueprint and taking VPAC to new heights that we will build upon.

Vintage Purples Alumni Club

Palmer Staff. The reason this game runs the way it does. I will always remember how awesome you were when I played. Thank you for taking care of both sides, being there late nights and early mornings. I will always remember that "The Green Team remains undefeated!"

Vintage Purples Alumni Club

2024 Purple Side Leaders ~ Thank you for your devotion to this beautiful Purple family. We are so proud of the two of you!

The Vintage Purples Alumni Club

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‘Pleasant’ not so pleasant

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Scene from Purple Side’s show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Purple Side’s “Pleasant Vanished” follows Carolynn Jack as she investigates the disappearance of the townspeople of Pleasant, Va.

The show opens with the song “Perfect in Pleasant!” where Carolynn reveals that 20 years ago, in 1985, 247 people vanished from Pleasant while attending a fall festival. Carolynn lived in Pleasant before her mom and dad’s divorce, after which she moved to live with her mom, who had custody of her.

As the song ends, the scene transitions to 2005, where Carolynn stops her professor, Eric Kauffman, to ask him what he knows about the disappearance of Pleasant. She has been spurred into investigating the disappearance after receiving her Aunt Viola’s diary in the mail. Carolynn has become convinced that the people of Pleasant are still alive. Eric says he does not personally know anything about the disappearance, but gives the contact of a friend who lived in Pleasant, Mary-Anne Connors.

As Carolynn reads Aunt Viola’s diary, the scene transitions to 1985. Viola is worried because Sebastian, her brother and Carolynn’s dad, has been acting strange. Sebastian is in an argument with his friend, Eric—Carolynn’s professor. Viola interrupts their argument, but neither respond to her. Eric storms away. Sebastian tells Viola not to worry and to trust him.

The scene switches to 2005. Reading the diary has left Carolynn with more questions than answers. She resolves to find the truth during the song, “What Is True?”

Carolynn exits, and Viola enters. She is speaking with Eric in order to find out what is going on between him and Sebastian. Eric is preparing to leave town, and he warns her that she should too. He tells her that he’s worried Sebastian is going to do something dangerous, but won’t tell her what. Viola is even more confused, and sings “What Is True? Reprise.”

In 2005, Carolynn is at Mary-Anne’s house. Carolynn asks about the fall festival before everyone vanished, prompting Mary-Anne to reminisce on the excitement of the festival. The townspeople were excited because Sebastian promised a surprise that would make magic real.

As Mary-Anne tells the story, the scene switches back to 1985. The townspeople are buzzing around the festival as Sebastian addresses them.

Viola pulls Sebastian aside to speak to him, demanding to know why Eric left town. Sebastian tells her that he didn’t know Eric had left, and returns to the festival. Viola writes in her diary that she’s going to find out what’s going on, even if Sebastian won’t tell her.



Scene from Purple Side’s show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Meanwhile, the festival-goers celebrate, singing “Magic Made Real.”

Mary-Anne also tells Carolynn there’s another person, Alex Greene, who is investigating the vanishing.

Carolynn hurries off to visit Alex, who draws her attention to the fact that there was a meteor shower over Pleasant at the same time that people began vanishing from the festival.

Carolynn asks Alex who she lost from Pleasant. Alex becomes defensive, but eventually reveals she lost her little sister—singing “Left Behind.”

Carolynn tells Alex about her father and aunt. Alex tells Carolynn that Sebastian was the mayor of Pleasant, information that Carolynn had never been told before.

Back in 1985, Viola discovers a stash of notes that convince her Sebastian is plotting something terrible. She confronts him. Sebastian tries to reassure her that the situation isn’t what she thinks, but won’t explain the notes. He asks her to trust him. Together, they sing “Who Are You?” before Viola runs away.

Back in 2005, Carolynn is at her mom’s house asking about Sebastian. Her mom says that she never told Carolynn about her dad’s involvement with the disappearance to keep her safe. She sings about realizing Sebastian was dangerous in “Left Behind Reprise.”

When Carolynn mentions Eric helping her with the investigation, her mom wonders why Eric never told Carolynn anything about Sebastian. Carolynn was unaware that they knew each other. Her mom says Eric is the reason why she left Sebastian; he convinced her that Sebastian was dangerous.

The scene transitions back to Pleasant, while Carolynn narrates that she had a dream where she saw Aunt Viola and all of the vanished people of Pleasant. She determines that they are trying to reach out to her for help, as the townspeople sing “Pleasant, Vanished.”

Carolynn leaves to speak to Eric. She asks why he never told her anything about Sebastian. Eric says he was worried that telling her about him would hurt her.

He begins to tell Carolynn about Sebastian’s ambitiousness through the song, “The World He Wanted.” He reveals that something shifted in Sebastian after he lost custody of Carolynn. Sebastian grew curious about how grief impacted the human brain, and approached Eric with an experiment idea.

The scene cuts to 1985, where Sebastian and Eric are discussing their ideas. Eric agrees to help Sebastian with his experiment.

Eric says Sebastian had spiraled and become secretive after the divorce. Sebastian was hyperfixated on his own grief, and let Eric believe that the experiment had died.

The scene switches back to 1985, back to the argument between Eric and Sebastian shown earlier. Eric is saying that Sebastian can’t go forward with his plans because of the consequences it could have for the people of Pleasant, but Sebastian doesn’t care.

Carolynn asks if Eric knows where Sebastian is now. He reveals that he received a letter from Sebastian once with a return address in Pleasant.

Carolynn enters Sebastian’s house, singing “What is True? Reprise.” She sees Sebastian sitting in his house and becomes angry that he never left to visit her. He tells her that he could not abandon Pleasant or his home. Carolynn finds this answer to be hypocritical, since he destroyed Pleasant. Sebastian is confused by this reaction and asks why she thinks that.

When Carolynn reveals that she has been speaking to Eric, Sebastian tells her she can’t trust anything Eric says because he ruined Sebastian’s life, and that it was actually Eric’s experiment that caused people to disappear from Pleasant. He claims that Eric framed Sebastian for his actions—getting Carolynn’s mom and Viola to distrust him.

Sebastian begins to tell Carolynn about the vanishing. As the scene transitions back to 1985, festival-goers begin to walk away in a zombie-like trance.

The scene switches back to 2005, as Eric enters. Sebastian tells Eric to tell Carolynn the rest of the story, and gets him a glass of water.

Eric reveals that he placed microscopic robots in the Pleasant’s water supply. The robots were ingested by the townspeople and triggered by the electromagnetic flares of the meteor shower—prompting them to take control of the townspeople’s bodies. Eric tells Carolynn that he transported the townspeople to the bottom of the ocean.

Carolynn demands to know why Eric did this. He reveals that he was deeply jealous of Sebastian. All three sing “Loose Ends,” where Eric celebrates his victory and Carolynn resolves to tell the people of Pleasant’s stories.

Eric continues to gloat when Sebastian reveals that, since everyone vanished, he has been studying Eric’s notes and recreated his experiment.

Eric realizes he has ingested the robots in the water that Sebastian gave him. Sebastian triggers the robots and sends Eric into the ocean, where he joins the residents of Pleasant.



Scene from Purple Side’s show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Letter from the editor: College Night

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

The first question that anyone who knows anything about Montevallo at all will ask you upon learning that you're a student here is, "Are you a Purple or a Gold?"

It is the question that defines campus life and the school's culture and traditions. At Montevallo, it is, hands-down, the single most important question you must ask yourself during your tenure as a student—forget trying to figure out your major or post-graduation plans.

My mom is a Montevallo alumna, and while she was never super involved with College Night, she's not above telling you that it's going to be a GV. When I decided to come to Montevallo, her and her Montevallo friends began to speculate if I would be a Purple or a Gold.

But for the last few years, when faced with that fateful question, I've had to respond, "Well, I'm neither. I'm a Green."

A startled hush falls over the room, before the asker dares to ask, "Oh, do you ever feel like you're missing out?"

This is a question, reader, that I've been asking myself recently amidst all the College Night festivities.

If you've been a frequent reader of this column, you'll know that I decided embarrassingly early on in my time at The Alabamian that I wanted to become its editor in chief. As editor in chief, it's important that you maintain press objectivity and integrity by remaining neutral about campus's most divisive event of the year, thus relegating you to be a Green. Instead of joining one side to have to abandon it later, I just never joined at all.

That's not to say I don't get the appeal of College Night. Even though I've never been much of a theater kid, I understand the appeal of joining-up and rooting for a team. I understand wanting to be part of something bigger than yourself—wanting to work together to create this larger-than-life product with decades of history and tradition behind it, to feel affinity with someone you may have never even met before just because you have this one thing in common.

Because that's what College Night is all about, right? It's this big, beautiful spectacular tradition that is unlike any other. It's a tradition that is just so, unequivocally Montevallo that it has the ability to transcend any campus divides and bring people together in celebration. Time and location are no match for College Night, as Montevallo alumni pour in from far and wide to see the show alongside freshman who just arrived on the bricks six months ago.

Haven't I cheated myself out of all of this by not joining a side? No, I've just found my place in the tradition in a different way.

Last year, former Alabamian managing editor of production, Josie Daisy, wrote a piece on her experience being Green as a member of Palmer's Staff—the group of people who make sure College Night runs smoothly each year. In this piece, she wrote, "With a team of great people, being able to participate in both shows simultaneously has been a great way to finish my final semester at UM. The lack of competition has now brought a joy to this tradition that I'm very happy to experience. It's not without its stress, as all College Night things are, but it's all worth the pain."

While I'm Green in a different way, Daisy's words resonate with me as well. I'm not an outsider in College Night and it's traditions, I'm just part of it in a different way. Even as I just spent a stressful week rushing to put together not just one, but two, special College Night editions of The Alabamian—the one you currently have in your hands and another edition that will never see the light of day again—I wouldn't have it any other way. When I and other members of The Alabamian's staff throw these papers to help announce the winner of this year's College Night, it's all worth it. I feel connected to the members of each side as they anticipate their side being called. I feel joy and take pride in knowing that I play a role in crafting a document of Montevallo's greatest tradition, that I have made a product that will be cherished by members of either side as a memento of their hard work and achievement.

So, no, I don't feel like I'm missing out. I feel I've found the side for me.

The only thing left to say, at risk of ending this on a somewhat snide note is this: Whether it's a PV or a GV, so long as there's a paper thrown at College Night, The Alabamian will always win.

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Shout-outs

Alumni: Welcome back to the brick streets! Whether it's a PV or a GV, it's always an AV – Alumni Victory!
There's something magical about reminiscing at Homecoming — the unique bonds and enduring friendships that come from being part of the Montevallo family. You Always Belong At Montevallo!
Tiffany, Laurel & Carolyn

Congratulations to the staff of The Alabamian on 100 years and best wishes for 100 more!
David Clemons '03

Break a leg to all the FAM students participating in College Night 2024! No matter if you're painting the stage purple, shining in gold, or adding a touch of green, you're forever part of the FAM. Your creativity, passion, and dedication are the driving force behind the magic that makes College Night unforgettable.
Your fellow FAM members

To UM students: Gold Side, Purple Side and Palmer Staff, we are proud of you and your accomplishments! Thank you for putting in so much effort and giving us a great College Night experience. And thank you, The Alabamian staff for this memory.
College Night, Yeah!
Tiffany R. Bunt, Laurel Hall Dobbins & Carolyn Carter (UM Alumni Office)

The Alabamian

Vol. 98, No. 13 | The Purple and Gold in Black and White | MONDAY, February 26, 2024

Remembering Barrett Dempsey

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Vigil goers gathered in Central State Bank Arena. Photo by Sarah Turner, Sports editor.

Bright candlelight filled Central State Bank Arena as Falcon athletes gathered on Feb. 13 to honor the memory of Barrett Dempsey, who was a member of the University's wrestling team.

Dempsey, a freshman from Byhalia, Miss. passed away in a car accident on Feb. 11. Athletic Director Mark Richard broke the news to the team the following day.

Maddie Taylor, a senior on UM's softball team, presented the idea to the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and asked SAAC representatives from different sports across campus to inform their teammates of the event.

At the vigil, the wrestling team filed in together after all attendees were seated, making their way to a designated section in the center of the stands.

Dempsey's photo was displayed in black and white on the arena video board, overlooking the Falcon athletic community.

Taylor welcomed everyone to the vigil and described the impact that Dempsey had on the team, and invited anyone willing to speak up to the microphone.

Vigil attendees each received a candle to hold in honor of Dempsey. The candles lit up the room with a warm glow while several teammates and coaches spoke about what Dempsey meant to them. Richard was the first person to speak on Dempsey.

"Just looking at the group of student athletes we have here today, we are a family right now," said Richard, "our wrestling team is hurting, and you guys coming out tonight to support them is great."

The Falcons wrestling team, in their inaugural season on the bricks, boasts a 3-2 Conference Carolinas record and one All-Conference selection in graduate student Gabe Hixenbaugh.

Central State Bank Arena was meant to be the host of the wrestling team's second and final home meet of the year the night of the memorial, but plans had to change following the news about Dempsey.

"We were supposed to be here tonight watching a wrestling match, with a packed gym and a lot of excitement, but you know what, we're here celebrating Barrett's life," said Richard.

Jensen Bergeron, Dempsey's roommate, explained that the two butted heads frequently in their first few months of living together.

"He was very organized, he was very straight-laced, he had everything together," said Bergeron. But once they returned from the December break, Bergeron said they started spending more time together.

"We started talking about faith, which is something that's really important to both of us, and we started finding small things we had in common," explained Bergeron to the crowd, but the moment didn't last long enough.

"I just think that if there's someone that you're waiting to connect with and feel like you don't know well in your life, please reach out to them and connect with them," said Bergeron, "You never know how much time you have."

Wrestling's head coach, Daniel Ownbey, followed, saying that Dempsey "embodied what we want a student wrestler to be here at Montevallo."

Ownbey further described what Dempsey meant to him and the team, saying, "he was definitely one of my favorite athletes that I've ever coached, and it was an honor to get to know him, and it was an honor for you guys to be here and celebrate in his life with us."

As Ownbey finished speaking, he asked the crowd to break it down with him in the same way Dempsey did, a unanimous "Falcons on 3."

All at once, everyone began extinguishing their candles, and the arena returned to darkness.

Those in attendance were left with the message that your time is short, and telling those close to you that you love them is even more important than you realize.

"This is my dream, this is my future": UM senior aces LSAT

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

University of Montevallo senior political science and sociology double major Alex Martinez made a perfect score on the Law School Admission Test.

The LSAT is a rigorous exam that determines your entry into law school, that students often spend months or years preparing for. The test scores range from 120 to 180.

When Martinez first came to UM, he decided to take a leap of faith by majoring in political science after discovering his passion for politics and government. Law school is a popular path for students majoring in political science, so Martinez decided to look into it.

After taking introductory law school classes and learning more about LSAT prep during his time in the Summer Scholars Program at the University of Alabama, Martinez decided that law school for him.

"Law school is difficult but it's something I knew I would enjoy," said Martinez.

With the experience Martinez gained from this program, he was able to begin preparing for the LSAT during his junior year. After 6 months of studying, Martinez took his first exam in June 2023. Martinez took the exam two more times before making a 180. The 9 months he spent preparing for this exam finally paid off.

During those 9 months, Martinez would spend hours a day taking classes, practice tests and studying his own material.

"The most critical part was figuring out what I need to study and how to study it," said Martinez.

Adapting the most effective ways of studying, taking countless practice tests and the support from his family and professors made the perfect score possible.

"I wouldn't have been able to do it if I didn't have my family supporting me through it," said Martinez.



UM senior Alex Martinez. Photo courtesy of Martinez.

The work doesn't stop after a perfect LSAT score, though. Crafting a good application and marketing yourself to schools is the next step on the path to law school. In addition to your test scores, law school applications often include essays, letters of recommendation and interviews.

"The LSAT isn't where it ends. You have to put work into your applications," said Martinez.

In total, Martinez applied to 16 law schools, including 13 of the top schools in the country. So far, he has received a full ride to three. With the University of Pennsylvania as his top choice, the decision on where to attend is pending his acceptance decisions and scholarship offers from other schools.

Continue reading on page 3.

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Playing the Academy's game

By DREW ROBERTS.

I was quite upset on Jan. 23.

Then again, Oscar nominations always disappoint me. The very act of picking five films to represent the best of certain categories is ridiculous. Someone—and by someone, I mean me—is bound to get their feelings hurt.

Yet, I tune in year after year. The vicious cycle came back with a special sting for this year's Oscars, for my worst fears had come true: Greta Gerwig had been snubbed for Best Director.

I don't need to tell you that people were upset. A cursory look at social media that fateful day would be enough to do that. Through video essays, TikTok rants and articles like this one, the public decried the Academy's decision, declaring it, along with Margot Robbie's snub in the Best Actress category, as flying in the face of the message of "Barbie."

The vicious cycle came back with a special sting for this year's Oscars, for my worst fears had come true: Greta Gerwig had been snubbed for Best Director.

I won't focus too much on Robbie's snub, mainly because she's competing against other women, unlike Gerwig.

Ironically enough, Ryan Gosling got a Best Supporting Actor nomination for playing Ken. Gosling released a statement shortly after the snub, saying, "there is no Ken without Barbie, and there is no Barbie movie without Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie, the two people most responsible for this history-making, globally-celebrated film."

A recent promotion for the ceremony featured Gosling, fellow nominee America Ferrara, Kate McKinnon and this year's host Jimmy Kimmel screaming in horror at the news of Gerwig's snub.

This self-awareness on the Academy's part may seem surprising, but it's really just par for the course. The Academy often tries to straddle the line between prestige and entertainment. For every self-important monologue on the power of cinema, there's the infamous Best Picture mix-up of "La La Land" and "Moonlight." Of course, that faux pas wasn't intentional, but it certainly makes it hard to take these award shows seriously.

Overall, "Barbie" received eight nominations, and yet, the ringleader of the entire operation received no recognition. I attribute this less to sexism, and more to the types of films the Academy usually nominates. Though, if you suspect foul play and sexist motives, I wouldn't fault you. The Academy has only given the Best Director Oscar to three women in its 96-year history.

To start, the Academy doesn't care much for comedies. A dramatic performance will beat a comedic performance nine times out of ten, and the same goes for the movies themselves. Comedies, especially studio comedies like "Barbie," also tend to lack the visual flair and immersive tone that dramatic films have. Including most or all of these elements is critical when seeking a Best Director nomination.

"Oppenheimer," "Killers of the Flower Moon" and "Anatomy of a Fall" have all of these things working in their favor, which is the reason why their respective directors got nominated. I haven't been able to watch Jonathan Glazer's Holocaust drama, "The Zone of Interest," but I've heard nothing but praise for his work behind the camera. Yorgos Lanthimos's "Poor Things" stands out as the only comedy. I have no interest in watching this film, but the visuals I've seen from it indicate the aforementioned immersion and tonality.

I won't leave you with a rallying cry on the injustice of the Academy. The organization itself isn't worth our time.

Where does this leave Gerwig? As a writer-director, with a heavy emphasis on "writer," she will have to play the Academy's game. Her niche resides in intimate human dramedies that lean on their ridiculously good screenplays. That's not what the Academy likes.

Yet, she improved leaps and bounds directorially in her sophomore effort "Little Women." It was a wholly unique take on a tale that had been done to death in previous films. The Academy saw this and decided to award a nomination to Todd Phillips, director of the insufferably mediocre film "Joker." I suppose the logic there was that it had already received 11 nominations. They just had to give it to Phillips. As you can see, the Academy doesn't follow that logic when it comes to "Barbie," so it often comes down to marketing and blind luck.

It's worth noting that Gerwig is the only director to have her first three films get nominated for Best Picture. Even if she doesn't hold a golden statue this year, her time will come. I won't leave you with a rallying cry on the injustice of the Academy. The organization itself isn't worth our time. I'll simply ask that you wait. One year the perfect narrative will fall into place. Gerwig's name will be called and she'll walk on that stage. Only then will some semblance of justice be served.

Letter to the editor: Palestine

By BLAINE RICHARDSON.

On Feb. 11, the Super Bowl was played. The Chiefs beat the 49ers, Travis Kelce and Taylor Swift celebrated, Usher performed and if you watched it on Nickelodeon for whatever reason, you got Tom Kenny narrating the entire thing as SpongeBob.

Also on Feb. 11, while we were distracted, the Senate met and voted on a foreign aid bill of $95 billion dollars for Ukraine, general humanitarian aid and most notably, Israel. In fact, even if you didn't know about the senate meeting, you probably are aware about Israel—during the Super Bowl Israel played an ad lobbying for the release of 136 hostages supposedly being held by Hamas and Palestine.

Sunday night, the Chiefs beat the 49ers 25-22. Feb. 11, 127 people were reported killed in the bombing of Rafah.

Israel also bombed Rafah on the night of Feb. 11. For those unaware, Rafah is the "safe zone" that the Israeli military demanded all Palestinian citizens to move to. Now the citizens are being told to move again, but there's nowhere left to go.

Sunday night, the Chiefs beat the 49ers 25-22. Feb. 11, 127 people were reported killed in the bombing of Rafah.

Let me be clear: I don't believe any Israeli citizens deserve to be held hostage or killed. That said, it does boil my blood that the military and government of Israel are so quick to paint themselves as victims as they continually kill the citizens of Palestine. To date, almost 28,000 civilians have been killed, half of those being children, with undoubtedly many more wounded or dead that we don't know of, yet they continue to say they would stop killing so many innocents if only for 136 hostages to be released—an action that Palestine has already agreed to do if a ceasefire was called. So it's a lie, but one that the US government seems to have… bought? President Joe Biden has repeatedly voiced support for Israel and the atrocities they commit, and Sunday night, the Senate passed the foreign aid bill with a vote of 67-27, meaning that 14 billion has just been approved to go and support Israel. But they must know what they're supporting, as they met on a Sunday, moreover, a Super Bowl Sunday, while the American populace would be distracted. For reference, meetings on Sundays are rare for the Senate, with the last recorded instance being on Aug. 7, 2022. So the Senate must know that what they're supporting isn't a war—it's a genocide.

So, in the coming days, months and years, when history calls this what it is—a genocide—any politician you support will likely change their stance. They will start saying how horrible Israel is and how they cannot believe that the government let this happen. When they do, you should dig back to this Super Bowl Sunday and see how they voted on the bill, or who they were voicing support for. I can almost guarantee you they were in support of Israel. And when you go vote, remember the 28,000 dead and how our government and politicians just approved funding for more to die.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Letter to the editor: Campus basketball court

By JAKE TAYLOR.

I am a student at the University of Montevallo, and one of the first issues I noticed when I arrived on campus was the basketball court behind the Student Activity Center does not have lines drawn out. It is not a major issue, but I suggest that someone could go out there and spray paint lines or create some that gives the court an entirely increased value with it being like a regulation court. When meeting a lot of students who like to play pick-up basketball, they mentioned that Montevallo is not a big basketball school, but we have students that want to play. It would encourage students who are into basketball to play structurally organized games and practice their basketball skills.

When I talk to other hoopers on the court about it, everyone is down with it.

When on a court without lines, games are very open and freelance. Players just run on a court around a ball causing no rhythm and spacing to the game. With the addition of lines, players would know exactly where they are on a court causing them to be more fluid and comfortable. It would also increase chances of making shots as the courts have double rims. This also allows for new players to understand and play within the boundaries of the game.

Adding lines could also lead to a basketball club opening on campus. It could be a student-led project to measure and add a free throw line and a regulation three-point line on each of the end goals, with either spray paint or another material. When I talk to other hoopers on the court about it, everyone is down with it. A friend, Joe Macks, student senator, had mentioned this idea in meetings and they say next year they will add something. I believe people should act now before it is another issue just swept under the rug.

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Shelby Humane faces overcrowding

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

As owner surrenders of pets surge, local animal shelter, Shelby County Humane Society, has been left overcrowded and under-resourced.

Shelby County Humane Society is located in Columbiana, just 25 minutes away from the University of Montevallo.

Interim executive director Saundra Ivy explained that capacity has always been a struggle for the shelter. In recent years, however, an increase in owner surrenders has made this issue more prominent.

"Owner surrenders, which are part of that problem, were three times higher in 2023 than they were in 2022. Three times higher. That's a lot. And if you can't transport a dog out somewhere, if transports were full, then you're sitting here with a swelling number on your hands," Ivy said.

Owner surrenders also have a negative impact on the animals being surrendered.

"They do grieve. Now, you can get them past the grief. It takes about three to six months to get them to stabilize, if they're in a home situation. I don't think that anybody even thinks about, if they drop a dog off, how much it costs to actually care for that dog. And, if it's sick, what does it cost in vet bills? Because we spend a lot of money on veterinary costs," Ivy said.

Due to overcrowding, Shelby Humane had to reconsider their no-kill policy in 2023.

In order to tackle this issue, and get more animals fostered and adopted, the organization has turned to various social media campaigns and adoption events in order to raise awareness. Ivy explained that the organization is extremely active on Facebook and Instagram, and they are starting to use TikTok as well.

The "Priority" and "All Star" lists on the shelter's website are another method of getting more animals adopted.

According to Shelby Humane's website, "The Priority List are those Adult Dogs that we have concern about based on their length of stay, behavior or medical issues, or general lack of interest from the public."



Dog at Shelby Humane Shelter. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.

The website describes the "All Star" list as "Adult Dogs that we believe would fit into a wide range of families."

"If we can get any of those out, it frees up space, which means we don't have to do anything to make space except get the dogs out, which is our whole goal, and it seems to be working," Ivy said.

The end goal for the animals at Shelby Humane is adoption. But, for many people who want to help, adoption isn't a possibility. However, Shelby Humane offers plenty of volunteer opportunities for people who want to find a way to help.

"We have Weekend Warriors, when you might take an animal home for the weekend or a day, and we have Hiking Buddies, which is usually when you take one out for a day. You can go out for a couple hours. It gets the dog out and exposes it to people and being on a leash," Ivy said.

According to Shelby Humane's website, "Every shelter dog could benefit from less time in the shelter and more time being stimulated to reduce kennel stress. The longer dogs are in the shelter environment, the more prone they are to develop mental, physical, and behavioral issues."

Programs like Weekend Warriors and Hiking Buddies, as well as the shelter's foster program, are intended to reduce kennel stress in the animals that are staying at the shelter.

Foster coordinator Karli Brasher elaborated on this.

"Adult dogs can start to go kennel crazy a little bit. They can get tired of being in the kennel, seeing the same old same old," Brasher explained.

With changes in the economy, there has been a decrease in people willing to take animals into their homes.

"But the cool thing about the fostering program is that we provide everything. So that sort of takes away the cost. It's like having a dog without the medical and everyday expenses of having a dog," Brasher said.

Burgundy Robertson, Shelby Humane's intake manager, explained the intersections and workflow of the shelter-- from animal intake to eventual adoption.

"It starts with us. We get the animal first, and everyone relies on us to tell them how the animal is. We don't know if this dog is gonna bite, we don't know how it's gonna react, so it's really important for us to pay attention to that and be able to pass that along. After that, some animals may go to medical if there's a medical issue, and then to the kennel," Robertson said.

Communication is vital between each department of the shelter.

"We really try to look at the good that we're doing, and the good situations, and the fact that we're helping people, or we're helping this animal. We're helping this situation the best that we can," Robertson said.

A passion for helping animals is what ties the staff of the shelter together.

"I got involved just because I wanted to do some volunteer work because I had retired. Never did I believe that I would get this involved with it. But, do I regret it? No, because I think it's something bigger than yourself. These people come together like family because they all have that common need," Ivy said.

A common consensus among employees at Shelby Humane was the importance of spaying and neutering animals.

"If you've got an animal, spay or neuter it," Ivy said. "The only way to stop this tide of so many animals is to get your animals fixed. And, if you're not going to have an animal, encourage others to get theirs fixed. Because that's the only thing that's going to stop this."

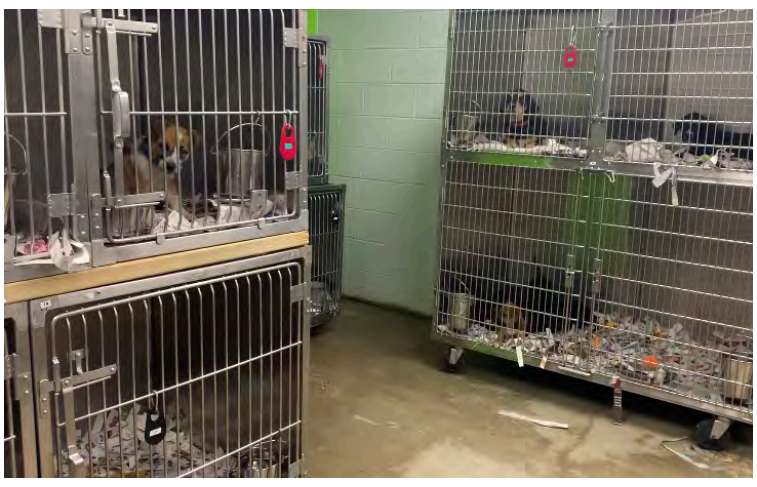
One solution that Shelby Humane offers for this problem is the Shelby Spay and Neuter Clinic.

Many people avoid getting their pets spayed or neutered because of the cost.

According to Shelby Humane's website, "It is the mission of Shelby Spay Neuter to provide low-cost options to pet owners in Central Alabama."

There are plenty of ways for community members to aid the shelter, from walking dogs and petting kittens, to taking animals into their homes to foster.

"The issue is we've got too many animals, and we'd like people to take responsibility for those animals. And, a lot of the time, stray animals make some of the best pets," Ivy said.



Dogs at Shelby Humane Shelter. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.

UM senior aces LSAT (cont.)

"There are no bad decisions, these are dream outcomes," said Martinez.

Although the LSAT and your application can be deciding factors, your extracurriculars and experiences outside of the classroom are vital in your preparation for law school. Martinez has been intentional with his time at UM by gaining experiences to equip him for the next step.

Martinez has participated in Model United Nations, which is an opportunity for students to simulate United Nations committees so they can practice diplomacy, learn about international relations and investigate current world issues.

He has also served as the Arts and Sciences Senator and Director of External Affairs for UM's Student Government Association. In this role, Martinez represented the College of Arts and Sciences and had a hand in planning and participating in Higher Ed Day.

When he is not taking classes, Martinez has spent his time in internships—one of them being with the Alabama State Senate. During his time in this role he was able to work alongside the Education Budget Committee, General Budget Committee and Education Policy Committee.

To Martinez, the hardest part of the law school application process is waiting on acceptance decisions, but he is looking forward to meeting other students who are working towards the same goal and handling the challenges that come along with law school.

"There are no bad decisions, these are dream outcomes."

For those interested in applying to law school, Martinze suggests setting aside time to learn how to study for the test and gaining internship experiences that will help prepare you for law school.

Before beginning law school in the fall, Martinez hopes to hold another internship and spend time with his family and friends.

There are many different avenues that law school provides. After working in litigation for a few years after law school, Martinez hopes to return home to the South, so that he can make a difference in his community by working as a civil rights attorney.



How in the world did you get to UM?

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Mateo Lopez-Hernandez, running at home in Colombia. Photo courtesy of Lopez-Hernandez.



Francesca deRoover at home in Belgium. Photo courtesy of deRoover.

With 24 NCAA Division II athletic teams and more than 500 student athletes, it's no secret that Montevallo's campus is home to some elite talent. Athletes come to the bricks from across the country, and sometimes even around the world.

81 international athletes make their home here in central Alabama, but one has to wonder: how do they get here?

"In high school I really liked to run," said Mateo Lopez-Hernandez, "so I was like if I could maintain that in college I would very much like to."

Lopez-Hernandez is a junior on the men's cross country and track and field teams from Bogotá, Colombia.

Most of the athletes here just wanted to compete at a higher level and still be able to get an education, and college sports are generally not offered at international colleges and universities.

"I wanted to pursue my career as a swimmer, and coming to America was a big option," said Juan Diego Celis, a junior on the men's swim team from Barranquilla, Colombia.

The recruiting process is very different for international athletes than it is for athletes in the states.

A lot of stateside athletes will reach out directly to college coaches, or coaches will directly contact them via email or in-person scouting events.

Most international athletes work through various online agencies to get in touch with college coaches, since it's more difficult to contact coaches directly, like domestic athletes are able to.

Prospective student athletes build an online profile with stats, scores and times. Coaches can browse through websites or the agencies can get in direct contact with the coaches as a medium.

"It's kind of like social media," said Francesca deRoover, a sophomore on the women's golf team from Waterloo, Belgium.

deRoover and Celis explained that they interacted with a lot of potential college coaches through FaceTime, where they would show them the school's campus and athletic facilities.

For Lopez-Hernandez, finding and deciding on Montevallo wasn't too difficult, as one of his high school teammates already attended the school. He also liked the Montevallo coach's training philosophy.

Before deciding on a school, potential student athletes will generally take a few "official visits" to their top school choices in order to get a better feel for the campus and team.

Lopez-Hernandez, Celis and deRoover were all unable to take an official visit to campus before committing to the school. For all three, their first time on the bricks was when they moved into school in August.

"That's kind of like a surprise thing when you get here," explained deRoover, "I mean, some people can afford coming here, but I didn't have time and it's a lot of money coming down here just for a visit."

Moving in was also the first time deRoover had ever even been to the United States, so being on a team with other international students was important to her. It was also important for her to go to a school in the South, because golf can be played year round in the warm weather.

"I think I got lucky because my teammates are so sweet and we have a pretty good team," she said.

Celis transferred to Montevallo this year from Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio. He was surprised by the differences in weather from Ohio to Alabama.

"In Ohio, it's very cold and it's always snowing, and here, one day is cold, the other day is hot," he said.

Earning a degree and competing in collegiate athletics is difficult for anyone, but especially when you're extremely far away from home.

All three athletes said there's one thing they miss the most about being home: food. Specific dishes and family meals that they can't get while they're at school. They also miss their family and friends that they don't get to see very often.

"I try not to be too homesick every time I'm here, it's only 4 years so it's gonna go by pretty fast," said deRoover, who plans to go back to Belgium for a Master's degree after she graduates from Montevallo.

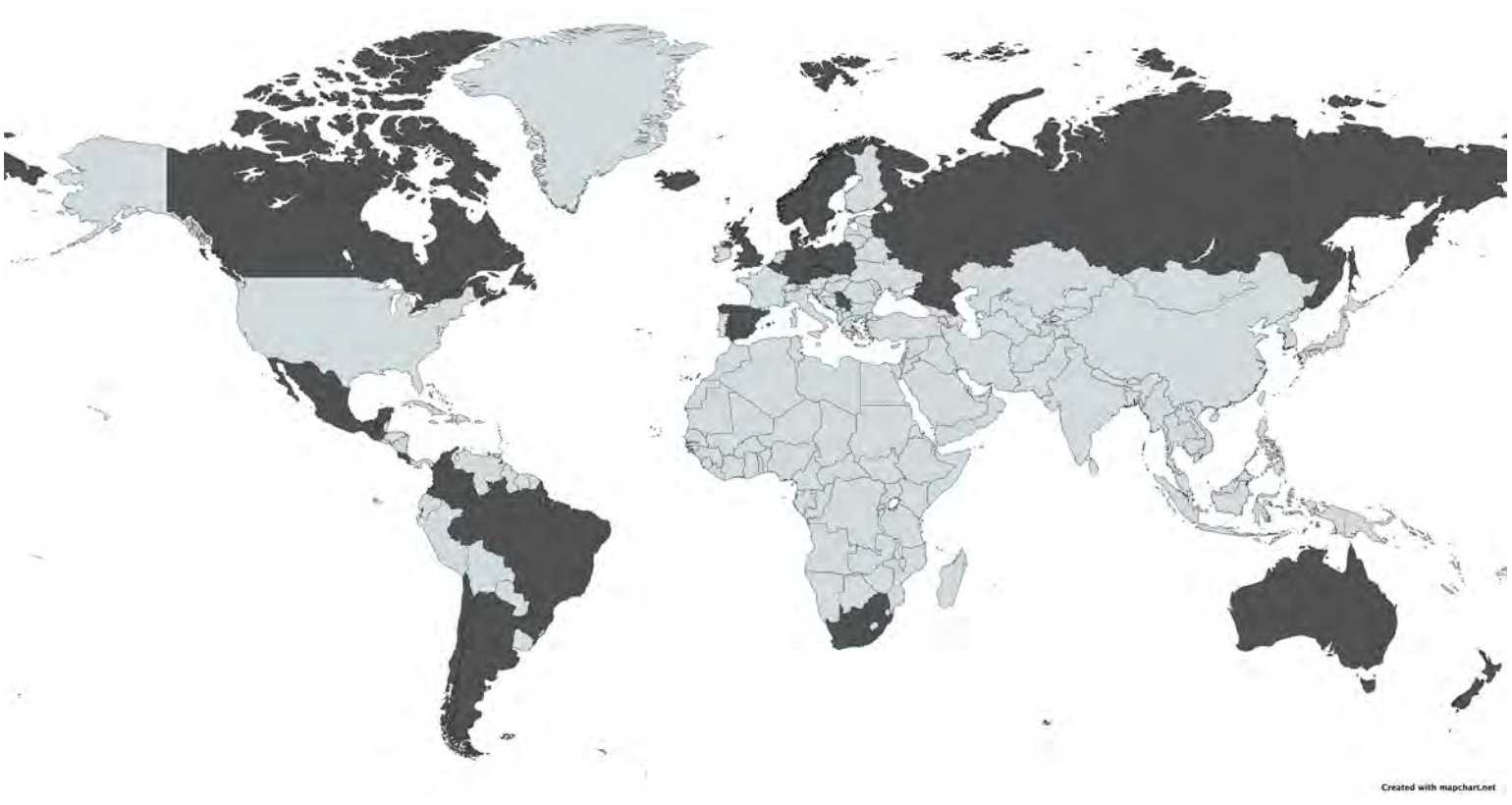
Lopez-Hernandez also misses being home frequently, but explained that his teammates now play an important role in his life.

"I didn't expect to become that close to that many people so quickly," he said, "I've got such a tight knit group of friends, and it was all within a year of knowing them."

The people that the three have met at Montevallo have been a major part of their experience in the States, and it makes it easier for them to be away from home for so long.

"I'm very lucky to have [my teammates]," said deRoover.

The Falcon athletic community is strong and still growing, and as these three athletes will tell you, it's easy to find a home on the bricks, no matter where you come from.



UM student athletes hail from around the world. This map shows what countries UM athletes call home. Graphic by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief. Graphic made using MapChart, using data from UM Athletics' website.

CANADA:
The country represented by the most international athletes at UM.
24 Falcons hail from our neighbor to the north.

MEN'S SOCCER:
The team with the most international athletes.
16 of the team's 32 players are international athletes, hailing from ten different countries.
Chile is the most represented country—five players are from Chile.

Up-and-coming at Juried Foundations

By OLIVE BIBB.



"Crumpled Crown," by Sarah Lancaster, on display at the Juried Foundations gallery. Photo by Olive Bibb.

The Juried Foundations art show is an annual art showcase featuring student pieces, on view in the Bloch Gallery until March 7.

The Juried Foundation art show gives up-and-coming art students an opportunity to present and display their artwork in an exhibit. Pieces are given merit-based awards awarded by a panel of off-campus jurors. During the reception, several student artists were given these awards for their works.

At the center of the exhibit stands a large metal sculpture, titled "Ascent." Creator Alayna Butler said the sculpture is intended to resemble shooting stars. Butler chose to represent their stellar intentions with several metal pieces of varying sizes exploding from the bottom of the sculpture, all reaching up into the sky.

Commenting on the design, Butler said, "I very much embraced the process of working with the shapes. I started off the project knowing 'I want to do stars.'"

They added, "My mental health kind of reflected the process of it. It started off as a downer piece, I wanted to flip it upside-down." Butler attributed this change in design to an improvement in their mental health.

Off to one side of the centerpiece rests what at, first glance, looks like a random assortment of pipe cleaners and other craft supplies molded into a rectangular form. From one side, however, viewers can see that the object is a brick, with the materials stuck onto it save for a sliver on one side.

Explaining the process for this piece, creator of "Soft and Lively," Ryan Spanier, said, "We had to take an object and put a bunch of different things on top of it so I thought it was funny to take a brick, and then making it really soft. Kind of like a stuffed animal."

In order to create the intended effect of "Soft and Lively," Spanier said, "I just covered it in many different pompoms and pipe cleaners that I thought were very childlike. I thought it was funny."

Another work in the gallery is a painting depicting a white paper crown laying on a grey background. The creator of this particular piece is freshman Sarah Lancaster, who submitted the piece, but said they did not expect to find it in the gallery.

"One of my finals for Drawing had to be a set of three pieces and I just submitted the one I spent the most time on and the one I liked the outcome of the most, and that was my favorite crown," Lancaster said, adding, "It was the first of a set of three that kind of told a story. So, the first one is the paper crown, which is supposed to represent false authority."

Those interested in viewing the pieces discussed here, as well as all other pieces on view, can visit The Juried Foundations Gallery in the Bloch Hall Gallery until March 7.



Painting by Bella Glattli, "Untitled," on display at the Juried Foundations gallery. Photo by Olive Bibb.



"Soft and Lively," by Ryan Spanier on display at the Juried Foundations gallery. Photo by Olive Bibb.

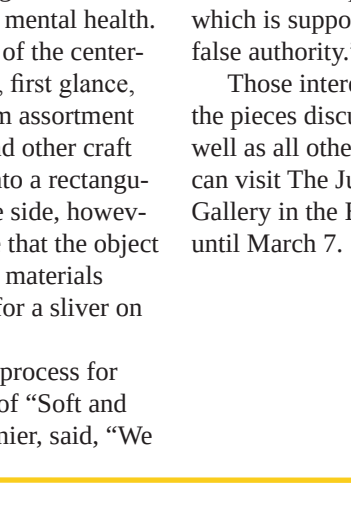
Oscars predictions

By CARTER JAMES.

Awards season for me is like March Madness for others. All year long I stay informed about prospective awards films in anticipation of Sunday night. If you're lost about who and what will be winning this year, I'm your guy. I'll be going over my predictions for above the line categories: Picture, Director, Actor, Actress, Supporting Actor and Actress and both screenplay categories.

Picture:

This is the easiest picture prediction I've given. It's "Oppenheimer." Since July, I have been saying this and now I'm 99% sure it'll win. There's no competition. No other film has won best picture at a precursor except for "Poor Things." If that's considered to be #2 in the race, then the gap is huge. Some might bring up "Barbie" as a potential winner, but it's had a weak awards season—usually only winning for Original Song and Production Design at precursors. Statistically, it's in "Oppenheimer's" favor. In the last five years, a movie has to win at least one guild related precursor to win best picture. "Oppenheimer" has won BAFTA and DGA.



Director:

Also a done deal. Christopher Nolan is winning for "Oppenheimer." He has won every major precursor to date: Golden Globes, Critics Choice, DGA and BAFTA. The only other people who could upset are Yorgos Lanthimos for "Poor Things" and Johnathan Glazer for "The Zone of Interest." I wouldn't bet against Nolan because this should be an easy prediction for everyone.

Actor:

This is where things get interesting. It's a two-horse race between Cillian Murphy for "Oppenheimer" and Paul Giamatti for "The Holdovers." Bradley Cooper's chances for "Maestro" died early into awards season. Jeffery Wright for "American Fiction" and Colman Domingo for "Rustin" gave great performances, but all the passion for them was for a nomination. Murphy and Giamatti are still a tossup because they have been swapping wins at previous shows. The SAG awards are soon, so whoever wins will be who I predict. For right now, my prediction is Murphy. Despite Giamatti having a stronger season than expected, "Oppenheimer" is not the same film without Murphy, and I feel like he'll pull through in the end. My personal pick would be either Murphy or Giamatti. They're both so great that I can't choose one.

Actress:

Another tight race here, but I have a strong feeling about who will win. Emma Stone has been winning here and there for "Poor Things," but I believe, come Oscar Sunday, Lily Gladstone will win for "Killers of the Flower Moon." Gladstone gives arguably the best performance of the year, and the narrative of her becoming the first indigenous actor to win Best Actress does not need to be understated. The passion for Stone is real, but I don't believe her performance is great enough to warrant a second Oscar for her. It would be nice to see Saundra Huller get a surprise win for "Anatomy of a Fall," as she's phenomenal and unforgettable. Don't count on Carey Mulligan winning anytime soon. She's good in "Maestro," but this isn't even close to one of her best performances. Annette Bening for "NYAD" is such a fake nomination to me. Yeah, she's good, I guess, but this took away from plenty of deserving actors, such as Greta Lee, Fantasia Barino and Margot Robbie. I'm sticking to my guns in this category, Gladstone is my prediction and pick.

Supporting Actor:

Robert Downey Jr. for "Oppenheimer" is my prediction and pick. Next, please. He's had an uncontested season. Ryan Gosling isn't happening for "Barbie." I like everyone in this category and am even glad that Sterling K. Brown got a surprise nomination for "American Fiction," but the winner of this category is obvious.



Supporting Actress:

This is a weird category to say the least, not because we don't know who will win. Da'Vine Joy Randolph for "The Holdovers" is my prediction and pick. She has literally won every precursor and critics group I can think of. It's a weird category because of who was nominated. America Ferrara was nominated for her monologue in "Barbie." Jodie Foster got nominated for "NYAD" because people actually love the movie? Danielle Brooks is amazing in "The Color Purple," but the movie has no love behind it. Emily Blunt is great in "Oppenheimer" but her winning is a non-problem for the movie's award chances. If I were a voter, I would've pushed for Sandra Huller to be nominated for "The Zone of Interest." She gives a better performance here than she does in "Anatomy of a Fall."

Original Screenplay:

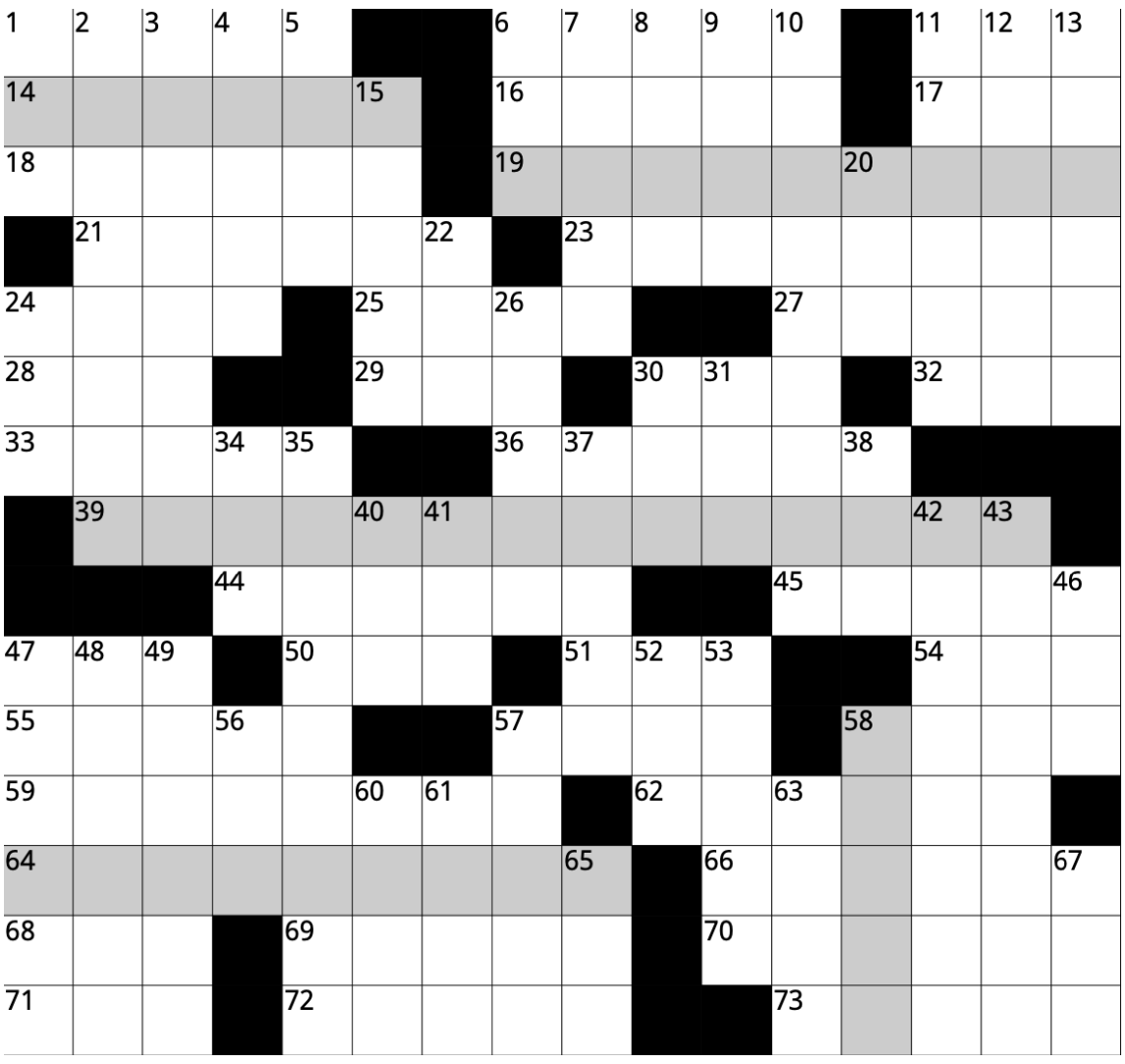
I believe there's room for surprises in this category, but I'm swaying one way for my prediction. "Anatomy of A Fall" has been the winner of this category most of the season and I don't have a reason to bet against it now. I would love a surprise win for "Past Lives," though. It's a shame that it'll most likely walk away with zero wins.

Adapted Screenplay:

Here's my risky prediction. I think "American Fiction" will win. Sure, "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie" are strong in this category, but "American Fiction" keeps on surprising when you least expect it. The BAFTA win reaffirmed my belief, so I'll stick to my guns. Honestly, I would be fine with any film winning. I obviously love "Oppenheimer." "Barbie" is sharply written. "Killers of the Flower Moon" is strong throughout. "The Zone of Interest" is genius. When it comes down to the winner, "American Fiction" is fresh and different enough to set apart from the rest.

Crossword: And the Oscar goes to...

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:
1. Scrub, as a mission
6. Kissing sounds
11. Lodge member
14. Gladiatorial 1959 Best Picture winner
16. Justice Sotomayor
17. Handheld Nintendo debut of 2009
18. Poisonous element prefix
19. 2016 Best Picture winner that was part of an infamous gaffe
21. For mature audiences
23. What credit card information might be stolen in
24. Uber competitor
25. Piece of cake
27. Fed. agency developing military tech
28. 1977 Steely Dan album
29. "Cheerleader" singer
30. Priestly garb
32. Harden
33. Southernmost Syrian city
36. Explode
39. 1969 Best Picture winner that is the only X-rated film to win
44. Horrified
45. Highway divisions
47. River to the Volga
50. Wrap up
51. Egg cells
54. Baton Rouge sch.
55. Canned tomato brand
57. Declare
58. Hairstyle
59. Member of a pop-rock sister trio
62. Sparkly headwear
64. Franchise that won Best Picture in 1972 and 1974
66. Yoga poses
68. Titular character of a 2012 Fredrik Backman novel
69. Literary twist
70. Coppola film "____ __ Translation"
71. Silent assent
72. Choir attire
73. _____ Island

Down:
1. Lawyers' org.
2. PB&J ingredient, maybe?
3. Photographing giraffes, perhaps?
4. Butler of fiction
5. Ditty
6. NYT and WSJ, for example
7. "Toy Story" cowboy
8. Cape buffalo
9. Clue
10. Caesar server
11. Lawn tools
12. Common silhouette for a sectional
13. Layered chocolate bar
15. Cowboy contest
20. Dockworkers' org.
22. Paul McCartney album
24. Young fellow
26. Sound of relief
30. Easy as ___
21. British bathroom
34. Mathematician Lovelace
35. Thin pasta
37. One of several same-named dukes of Bavaria
38. CEO's degree
40. Him, in Berlin
41. Wander (about)
42. Being borrowed by
43. "You heard me right"
46. Opposite of pref.
47. Where to find Eugene
48. Albania neighbor
49. Was at, abbr.
52. Cat doc
53. Helvetica look-alike
56. Clem Snide singer Barzelay
57. Bring, in Paris
58. 2005 Best Picture winner that isn't to be confused with a Cronenberg film
60. Finnish city
61. Marketing stunt name for a pancake franchise
65. Jean who wrote "Wide Sargasso Sea"
67. 1983 Indy winner Tom

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor, and CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

Aries:
Start a radio station, Aries, and air your grievances over the airwaves.

Taurus:
Fall into unruly torpor, Taurus. It's the time of year to go crazy!

Gemini:
You're a superstar, Gemini! Due to the Academy's scandalous ways, you have secretly been nominated to win an Oscar, and I've been paying people off to vote in your favor. Good luck!

Cancer:
Cancer, I see dogs in your future. Specifically, I see you volunteering at the Shelby Humane Society—I've heard they're looking for people to walk their dogs.

Leo:
Go shopping for printers and microwaves, Leo. They're good to have around.

Virgo:
Get your files in order, Virgo. You will need them. After that order a birthday present for your Pisces friend.

Libra:
You will make a perfect score on your LSAT, Libra. Not taking the LSAT? Well, get on that.

Scorpio:
Watch out, Scorpio! There's a tiger. Where? That's the question.

Sagittarius:
Pho, Sagittarius, is a powerful food. Go get some at your earliest convenience. It will give you mysterious, unexplainable powers. But will you use these powers for good or evil? That remains to be seen.

Capricorn:
Move to Lawrence, Kansas, Capricorn... and what else? You decide.

Aquarius:
I see a cat with an oddly human name in your future, Aquarius. Maybe Larry.

Pisces:
You're going to get really into pie in the coming months, Pisces. Stock up on pie ingredients.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.



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Poetic focus with Pulitzer winner

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



John Archibald delivering the Hallie Farmer Lecture. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

"It's always embarassing for me to get up and talk about, you know, writing at prestigious institutions of higher learning," writer John Archibald began the biennial Hallie Farmer Lecture on March 6 in the LeBaron Recital Hall, "I'm the only person who will ever come to lecture on writing who flunked Language Skills 2 in high school."

Archibald is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning journalist—most recently winning the Pulitzer for Local Reporting in 2023 for his coverage of policing in Brookside, Ala. Archibald's work extends beyond his news writing, however. The multi-hyphenate is also a columnist, podcaster and author of memoir, "Shaking the Gates of Hell: A Search for Family and Truth in the Wake of the Civil Rights Revolution." Tying his work together is a focus on Alabama and the Deep South.

Archibald's lecture, titled "The Future of Writing (and Truth)," focused on the status of writing-based industries, such as journalism, in a future that seems increasingly more unwilling to value the importance of writing.

Archibald began this discussion by zeroing in on the way his job as a journalist allows him to connect with other people, saying, "One of the coolest things about my job is that people, over the course of time, begin to sort of think they know me."

Readers often correspond with Archibald, and several, he said, like to send him poetry they've written.

"Some of it is fantasic, and some of it is not so much," he said.

Archibald went on to say that, recently, he recieved a poem from a filmmaker, Billy Fields, that encouraged him to see the poetry in life and in writing, even when he feels like he has lost the plot.

"That hit me kind of hard because, you know, I believe in words," said Archibald, adding, "I love the rhythm of them, you know, the way they can sing even when there's no music involved. And that's the poetry that he's talking about."

Archibald then transitioned into discussing an increasingly more fraught social and political landscape that affects media, saying that we have forgotten how to disagree with one another.

"You know, we've banned the study of important-to-read history in a lot of our schools because we don't want to make a kid feel uncomfortable," he said, adding on, "I should point out that I was very uncomfortable with the subject of algebra when I was in school, but they sent me to summer school to learn to cope."

Archibald pointed towards this outrage culture, as well as the advent of AI writing and algorithmic newsfeeds, as negativly impacting the "business of words."

"All of those people who use, you know, reason and words and evidence and such to provide, sort of, sanity in the world are under, sort of, siege," he said.

"It scares me to death," Archibald said about the advent of AI, saying he worries about the state of a society that does not value creative work, adding, "It takes a lot of confidence to simply say what you think needs to be said and to stand behind it no matter what people say."

While Archibald is wary of the path journalism and writing-based industries seem to be on, he made it clear that he is not nostalgic for the "golden age of journalism." He expressed concern that being overly nostalgic will stymie progress in the industry, "As if the death of media is an inevitability and like it's a funeral."

Continue reading this story on page 3.

Throwing far, jumping high

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor

Competing at a high level is a major reason student athletes choose to attend the University of Montevallo, and two members of the women's track and field team have been doing just that all season.

Senior thrower Nyla Shipman will become just the fifth athlete in Montevallo track and field history to compete at an NCAA track and field championship meet.

Junior pole vaulter Skylar Suggitt fell just short of qualifying, but still competed well during the indoor season.

The NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships, hosted by Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kan., take place on March 8 and 9, and Shipman will be competing in the weight throw.

To qualify for the NCAA championship meet, an athlete has to hit a provisional standard, often referred to as "provo,"which could be a specific time, height or mark based on the athlete's discipline.

Just hitting provo often isn't enough, as the meet will only accept, at maximum, the top 20 competitors from around the country based on the best times and marks throughout the season.

Though both Shipman and Suggitt were able to hit these top-notch marks this year, their respective journeys up to this point have not been easy.

"Coming into the team, I knew I wanted to win," said Shipman, who committed to Montevallo after graduating in 2020 because the school was close to her home in Troy.

The University of Montevallo's men's and women's track and field teams compete year-round with elite competition from around the Southeast in the Gulf South Conference, which can make winning sometimes difficult, according to Shipman.

In field competitions, athletes each get three opportunities to throw or jump. The top nine marks will make it through to the final round, where they will earn three more attempts.

"My freshman year, I just wanted to make sure I made it into finals," said Shipman, "and then when I got here and started competing, I was like, 'Okay, now I want the school records.'"

Shipman currently holds the hammer throw, weight throw and discus school records, and held the shot put record up until this year.

Suggitt came to Montevallo all the way from Houston, Tex. after seeing the school on social media and getting in touch with the coaches through recruiting apps.

"For me, it was just like chasing 12 feet since high school, and it felt unachievable," said Suggitt, who didn't hit the 12 foot mark, or 3.6 meters, until this season and is now the pole vault school record holder.

Suggitt cleared a 3.77 meter jump to earn her provo mark at the Samford Bulldog Invitational in February.

"I remember almost falling off the mat because I was so excited," said Suggitt, "hitting provo mark was a really big deal for me, even though I didn't make it to nationals."



Nyla Shipman placed 1st in GSC's weight throw. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

Suggitt won the GSC gold in pole vault her freshman year, but experienced a decline in performance her sophomore year. She said that getting a new pole vault coach this year has been incredibly helpful to her success, as well as the team's other vaulters.

"I feel like I've kinda shown you can plateau for so long and come back with the resources available," explained Suggitt.

For Shipman, GSC gold and hitting provo happened all at once.

Shipman had been sitting at the top of the conference weight throw standings for nearly the entire indoor season. However, the week before the conference meet, her top competitor out of the University of West Georgia took the leading spot.

"I knew I had to work harder and throw something that I've never thrown before," said Shipman, explaining that she was hesitant going into conference.

Similar to Suggitt, Shipman steadily improved during her freshman and sophomore seasons, but fell short during her junior season, saying she thought she might have lost her potential.

She said that this season, something shifted mentally and she knew she could come back.

"At conference, the energy and atmosphere that you're in has a really big influence on performance," said Shipman.

At the conference meet, Shipman hit a 16.89m on her first throw, and her West Georgia competitor threw a 17.89 to take the lead on her third attempt, which were both provisional marks.

"Hitting provo wasn't really exciting because I'm like, 'Now I have to win,'" said Shipman.

On her last attempt, she launched a 18.50 meter throw to take the gold.

She said that winning conference was a relief, because she had done what she set out to do early on in the season, and had solidified her number one spot that she had held all season.

Going into the national meet, Shipman is focusing on her preparation and mental space in order to compete at the highest level she can.

"I've never been in that setting," she said, and also explained that she's having to make slight changes to her throwing technique in order to give herself the best opportunity for success.

Shipman will compete in Kansas on March 8 at 4:55pm CST.

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Letter from the editor: Simple joys

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

I feel a lot of pressure when I sit down to write one of these letters to make it about something big and meaningful in a cool, literary, subdued, understated way. I mean only through trying to achieve that kind of juxtaposition does one end up writing an article about their love of ducks that is actually about Thanksgiving? Still not quite sure what I was thinking there.

I'm not really sure why I put so much pressure on myself to write letters in that way. I mean, I don't think anyone reads my column expecting for me to crack open any of the mysteries of the universe for them.

So instead of trying to get deep with it, I figured for this issue I would try and do something different with my letter: focus on some of life's simple joys. The following article is a list of some of life's small gifts that have made me happy lately. I hope it inspires you to reflect on the small joys that dot your life as well.

1. Pastrami on rye (and other sundry treats)

Sandwiches are God's given food on this realm of existence, I think. I mean, how much better can food get than two pieces of bread with literally whatever your heart desires between them.

And chief among God's chosen foods, is... the peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Which may seem like a curve ball given the title of this entry, but second among them is the humble pastrami on rye.

I don't know how to talk about food in a way that fully conveys how wonderful it is to eat something good, but I can say, when I bit into the pastrami on rye that I got at The Garage in Birmingham this weekend, I felt such an unbridled amount of joy and glee. We have to eat to live, but how wonderful that we can also live to eat—that the very stuff that embues us with our lifeforce quite literally can also embue us with the will to enjoy life more.

And it doesn't stop with pastrami on rye. A whole host of other foods have inspired this feeling in me recently: cookie cake for my birthday, pollo loco from El Agave, garlicky pasta with mushrooms, chocolate chip waffles, mint chocolate chip ice cream. How exciting is it to think about what food might delight me tomorrow?

2. Rewatching "The X-Files"

To me, "The X-Files" is peak television. Interesting, weird, has David Duchovny in it... The list goes on.

Rewatching it is even better because, even as a fan of the show, I will be the first to admit that there are some episodes of "The X-Files" that should never have seen the light of day. Now I can skip around to episodes I enjoy more.

And even better than that is watching the show with a friend who hasn't watched it before. There's something just so wonderful about sharing a piece of media you love with someone who hasn't seen it before that will make you excited about it like you're watching it for the first time as well.

3. Charli XCX's "Von Dutch" (and other songs that make me feel like I'm in the club when I'm in the Caf)

February was a good music month for me for many reasons, two of which being Caroline Polacheck's release of the expanded version of her 2023 album, "Desire, I Want to Turn Into You," on Valentine's Day and Charli XCX's release of her new single "Von Dutch."

But my biggest musical disovery of February was that it is so fun to listen to club and house music that makes you want to boogie while doing mundane tasks. Lately, I've been really into blasting songs like "Von Dutch" or the Yaeji remix of Robyn's "Beach 2k20" while I've been getting breakfast from the Caf in the mornings. Really adds a little fun to my morning routine.

4. Gluing items into my journal

I am a firm believer in keeping a journal, and I'm also a firm believer that that journal should be at least twice as thick when you're finished with it as it was when you got it. A journal is a great way to document and archive your life at any given moment, and I've found that my favorite way to do that is to glue ephemera from my life into my journal. Suddenly small mundane things like receipts become meaningful mementos of where I was one day.

Plus, there's some sense of unbridled kindergarten crafttime glee that comes out of going ham with a gluestick that I think is good to experience every once in a while.

Have thoughts? Pressing issues you would like to address? Learn how to submit a letter to the editor by scanning the QR code below.

Letter to the editor: Montevallo needs to change, or it is going to die

By JOSIE DAISY; UM Alum, secretary of the Montevallo Legacy Project and SLIDE Art Collective co-organizer.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

I'm frustrated with Montevallo's epidemic of apathy.

The post college pressure of deciding my path is huge, but my decision to stay or leave Montevallo is an even larger one.

I'm a lesbian trans woman. I'm a musician and experimental artist. I'm a LGBTQ+, reproductive and racial justice advocate. Why would I stay in Montevallo, or even Alabama? I am not represented or valued here.

I want to find somewhere where I can plant my seeds. I want to live somewhere where I can blossom. I want to discover a community where all of our dreams bear fruit.

I was then challenged by community member Elvie Schooley during a panel.

What if I stopped dreaming of life in another town? What if I brought my dreams to fruition in Montevallo?

I'm sick of waiting for change to just happen.

The stars feel aligned, and I'm slowly realizing our place in Montevallo's wheel of fortune. The wheel is gonna keep turning, and we have to decide now that we will push it forward.

How do we address the ripples in our town after segregation and enslavement?

How are we handling the racism and bigotry that still exists in our town?

How is our city preventing gentrification?

Why doesn't the city represent the most essential group of people in the town, BIPOC and queer folk?

How is UM addressing the lack of gender inclusive housing and bathrooms?

What is UM to do with the empty and stagnant King House, once a plantation where campus now lies?

How are we recording and preserving dying queer voices and stories?

How is UM handling the state legislature's active attack on black education and trans youth?

How is UM's curriculum addressing the dying need of higher education in the internet's free world of information?

How is UM taking advantage of its resources to connect students with urgent research and work happening in its own town?

How is SGA taking advantage of their resources and time to create a better UM?

How are we showing up for students and youth who feel disempowered and voiceless?

How do we handle the disconnect between the city, the university, and its students?

Why aren't these issues a priority?

How much longer does Montevallo have until people stop caring?

How can we dream of a better Montevallo?

I say none of this to disregard the important work currently happening in town. But where is our dialogue outside of chats at the grocery store and kiki's behind closed doors? Where is our organizing? How are we filling the gaps that we see everyday? Who is deciding the answers to our issues?

Why am I having to ask these questions when I attended a supposedly progressive liberal arts college?

Maybe Montevallo isn't apathetic, maybe we just feel hopeless. I feel repressed and depressed when I lie and say that everything is fine, and I wonder if you feel the same.

I can't do this alone, and I need your help. We need a connection of people who don't care for the status quo, and are passionate about helping their neighbor. We need community.

Please reach out to montevallolegacy@gmail.com if you are passionate about making change. How can you use your talents, power, and privileges to move the needle? Here's to a better Montevallo, One Montevallo.

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News

Policy changes email rules

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

On Feb. 22, the University of Montevallo announced that UM students and employees can now request alias email addresses based on their legal, preferred or professional names.

Joe Walsh, UM's chief information officer, explained the steps that were taken to make this happen.

"It's an idea that's been going around for a while, where people are inconveniently stuck with an email address that they were assigned originally and not being able to change that," Walsh said. "There's some technical issues associated with it that we had to work through, and just some logistical ones on how to manage this and make sure that everyone is being treated fairly and has the opportunity to change their alias. I think it's probably taken us, from the time that we first started talking about it to the time we implemented it, about a year."

Walsh explained that the process of requesting an alternate email address is simple. All of the information can be found on the Information Services and Technology section of the school's website.

"There's a whole page that talks about it, and there's a form that people can quickly fill out. It gets submitted, and if it's a student, the name gets verified by the registrar's office. If it's an employee, it gets verified by HR. The process is only a couple of days," Walsh said.

The only limitation, Walsh explained, is that the name in the alias email address is a name that is recorded in Banner, the school's student information system.

"We have to follow a certain protocol," Walsh said. "As long as a preferred name is filed with the registrar's office or HR as a preferred name, then that can be verified and we can use that name."

Walsh hopes that students and employees who feel as if their name is not accurately reflected in their UM email address will take advantage of this new process.

Council tackles vice and Korean excavators

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Laryssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

The Montevallo City Council, during their Feb. 26 meeting, discussed an ordinance that would make changes to the approval process for certain downtown business licenses.

Prospective businesses to be affected by the ordinance include tattoo parlors, payday or title loan businesses, check cashing businesses, pawn shops, gold and silver brokers, vape and tobacco shops, package and liquor stores, CBD stores and regulated massage parlors.

Reading from the ordinance, City Clerk Steve Gilbert said these types of businesses, "may adversely impact the city's development and effectively limit the ability of the city to attract diverse types of businesses."

Gilbert said the ordinance would, "set up a review process in which those applications would be subject to council approval before being granted a business license within the urban core and also grandfathers any business of that type to its existing physical location."

Council member David King asked Gilbert if the ordinance outlined any requirements that would need to be met in the review process or if prospective business owners simply had to submit their application to the council.

Gilbert responded, reading from the ordinance, that requirements will include, but are not limited to, "responsibility by the city for the protection of public health, morals and welfare, protection of existing properties including property use, value and historic district designation, traffic and pedestrian safety, consistency, compatibility and conformity with the City of Montevallo Comprehensive Plan."

The council voted to pass the ordinance. King who owns Goliath Lending, a pawn shop at 610 Valley St., abstained from the vote.

Following their discussion of the ordinance, the council reviewed a request for $57,295 from the city sanitation account to purchase a Bobcat E40-R2 Excavator to be used by the Montevallo Public Works Department.

Council member Martha Ann Eisenberg expressed disapproval for the choice of excavator saying, "You do know that Bobcat has been bought by another country—another country—and that, in order to get parts, they come from South Korea. So, I do not think Bobcat is the best thing for us at this time. I think you should consider something that's being made in America, that you can get parts in North Carolina."

Eisenberg said she would prefer an excavator made by Caterpillar or Thompson.

Head of Public Works Kirk Hamby replied the model was priced lower than a Caterpillar 235 Series Excavator, which was also considered. Hamby also said public works employees were familiar with Bobcat brand machines, and the excavator was light enough to be towed by a trailer already owned by the city.

Eisenberg showed further disapproval for the choice saying, "The model you're talking about just came on the market in October. It has not been truly tested."

In response to Eisenberg's comments Hamby remarked, "I thought I did my homework. I should get a B," but continued to be in support of purchasing the proposed excavator.

The motion to grant the funds passed 5-1, with Eisenberg opposed.

The council then discussed a motion seeking to place a moratorium on building auxiliary structures on certain residentially zoned lots.

Montevallo Mayor Rusty Nix said these structures included, but were not limited to, garages, car ports and storage buildings.

Regarding the structures the moratorium would seek to prevent, Eisenberg asked, "Buildings that have been built too large and not properly inspected or anything, can we not ask them to be torn down?"

"That would have to go before our code enforcement and our enforcement people" King said, telling Eisenberg, "I understand that there's some people that are concerned about a specific structure and I know that that is under review currently."

Eisenberg then questioned Gilbert about a specific auxiliary structure in town asking, "What about the other structure that I said something to you about near the viaduct?"

Gilbert responded, "At the time that was issued, there was really nothing that was out of character at that point. Now I know the style of the building rubs some people the wrong way, but I mean as far as size and where it's located it's within the ordinances. I mean that's—I don't know what else to tell you councilwoman. I mean, it conforms."

Council member Kenneth Dukes expressed apprehension regarding the motion, saying, "I would be hesitant for one reason: we're a city that wants growth. We're a city that wants people to come in and build homes and have that."

"If were gonna do a moratorium, I think that we ought to put a time limit on it and have it done within a specific amount of time, so that we don't limit people, and the growth that's gonna happen—that's happening in Montevallo right now," Dukes said.

Council member Sonya Swords told Dukes that the moratorium would only be in effect for six months if passed.

King also said the Planning and Zoning Commission are working to write permanent ordinances for the council's vote that would explicitly govern the size and nature of auxiliary structures allowed in these residential zones.

"I'm under the understanding that this moratorium is just a temporary freeze until such time as the Planning and Zoning Commission can present this council with their recommendations," King said.

The motion to create a moratorium was passed by the council unanimously.

Following Montevallo Chief of Police Jeremy Littleton's report to the council, council member Leila Mitchel asked Littleton if there are cameras at George Dailey Park, saying, "I had a complaint from yesterday that they had men out there—grown men gambling at the gate or the entrance of the park."

Littleton said the park does have cameras and the tape from the previous day would be reviewed.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, March 11, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.

Poetic focus (cont.)

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

He added that journalism has historically also played a role in upholding systems of oppression, saying,"All of this good old day stuff is based so much in false memory and lies and privilege. The golden age of news was the golden age of the journalism jobs, maybe, but it was not the golden age of journalism. Newspapers, you know, for generations were megaphones for the status quo, and the status quo was white supremacy and segregation."

But Archibald admitted that there were facets of journalism from the past that he misses in today's industry, reflecting on his feelings after a slate of state newspapers, including "The Birmingham News" where Archibald worked as a metro columnist, switched to digital-centric coverage—prompting mass layoffs in these newsrooms. Archibald was not laid-off, but felt as though he was working in an unfamiliar landscape.

"The change just really sort of crushed me, and I remember, vividly, lying in bed thinking, 'I can't do this,'" he said.

Archibald worried that he would no longer be able to write news in a way that connected to his readers, and admitted that he considered giving up on his job.

But then, he said, he gradually began to draw inspiration from a new generation of journalists entering the workforce who lacked some of the inhibitions that many veteran journalists had.

"Somehow, I'm the oldest guy in the room talking to these younger people about what the possibilities might be," he said.

Archibald pointed to collaborating with younger journalists as part of what allowed him to pursue new projects in new mediums, including podcasts, videos and cartoons.

"All of a sudden, while all of the people I had grown up with in this business—many of them had left or were just mad because we didn't do things how we used to do them—had gone and found other things to do, and I was somehow being pulled along on this sort of journey of trying to reach people in different places," he said, adding, "It saved my life so much because all of a sudden it was fun again."

"As long, I think, as we focus on the poetry, you know, I think we've got a chance of pulling it off."

Archibald admitted that breaking into writing-based industries can be difficult, but added, "But these crazy times provide a whole lot of crazy opportunities too."

These opportunities allowed Archibald to continue to pursue writing stories that spoke to people's lived experiences. In talking about his work covering the over-policing of Brookside, he said that the response from town residents reminded him of why he does his work.

"I'll never forget, one woman, she came and said, 'I got my life back.' And, you know, people ask me why I do this and that's — that was about as good of an answer as I could ever hear," he said.

As for the future of journalism and writing, Archibald is not letting change daunt him.

"I'm not known as an optimist. I don't know if y'all know that," he said, "But, I'm fairly optimistic because the people who want to do this kind of work have got to be a certain type of person who is bold and willing to take chances and willing to risk doing it to do the work. And if those are the people who get into the business, the business is going to be okay."

Tying it back to Field's poem, he concluded, "As long, I think, as we focus on the poetry, you know, we've got a chance of pulling it off."

Following his lecture, Archibald fielded questions from audience members in a Q&A session. Topics of discussions included Alabama politics, advice to aspiring journalists and anecdotes about his time working in newsrooms.

The Hallie Farmer Lecture Series occurs every two years, and seeks to honor the legacy of former UM faculty member Dr. Hallie Farmer. Farmer served as chair of the Department of Social Sciences at Montevallo from 1927 until 1956. Farmer was also an advocate for social reform in Alabama, campaigning for prison reform, repealing poll taxes and improving legislative processes.

Kojima on College Night dedication

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.



Alfred Kojima recieving the College Night dedication. Photo courtesy of Michael Wade, Wade Event Photography.

Are you a Purple or a Gold? This is a question that, majorly, defines life on campus. However, there's one person on campus who will always hold up both a peace sign and thumbs up, and this year, he did just that while receiving this year's College Night dedication.

Alfred Kojima, UM's transportation and parking attendant, received the dedication on Feb. 17, Sweet Saturday. Kojima has a long history with College Night, and it has nothing to do with either parking or transportation.

Completing his 24th year at UM, Kojima first arrived on the bricks in 2000. He served as Sports Information Director, before starting his position as UM's Transportation and Parking Attendant in 2008.

Kojima attended the United States Sports Academy after moving to the South from southern California. Prior to his positions held at Montevallo, Kojima served as a Volunterr Sports Information Director at Spring Hill College from 1996 until 1998, and as Assistant Sports Information Director at Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Fla. from 1999-2000.

Sports, specifically College Night sports, have been a long-running passion for him.

College Night, aside from the shows, also involves sports. This year, Gold Side took home wins in volleyball, ultimate frisbee and women's basketball while Purple Side won in men's basketball. Kojima helped to manage and score each game, and you'll likely find him wearing green while keeping track of the plays.

"I've always been a volunteer," said Kojima. "It just kind of evolved in doing the administration of the games. Volleyball and basketball—and we had soccer at the time—ultimate frisbee. So, that goes all the way back to 2009, but I've been helping out with games since 2005."

Kojima admires the passion found in College Night sports, having a background in university athletics.

"They're very into it." He continued with a remark about student involvement in College Night, saying, "It's just the students who get together and try to organize the teams into the two teams."

When asked if Kojima is a Purple or a Gold, he replied, "Yes I am."

While Kojima is heavily involved with College Night athletics and knows the scores, he doesn't make his final prediction as to who will win on Saturday night until the shows are over.

"I've been going to College Night on Saturday night every year since 2006," said Kojima. "I only watch one show: Saturday. So, I just base my whole opinion on what I see on Saturday. And, fortunately, the last three years I've got it right."

However, at this year's show, Kojima could tell that something was unusual about that particular Saturday: his seat. He then started to debate whether something bigger was about to happen.

"I had a feeling that something was amiss. There were enough little hints that something was kind of amiss. Cause, for my little four games that I helped out with, the College Night people, they're real generous, they give me a ticket for Saturday night. Every year. I've had it every year. And I tell them, 'Put me in the back, put me in the middle, put me in the back, somewhere,'" he said.

His ticket was abnormal, though. Kojima had been placed towards the front of the audience.

"And when they gave me the ticket, and they didn't get what I normally got, I said 'Hey, we missing a ticket here?'"

Kojima thought that there had surely been a mistake, but said, "At least there were other people down there with me."

Kojima's suspicions of abnormality became clear as he was recognized as this year's College Night Dedication recipient.

"To say that I'm surprised with the nomination, with the award, yeah, it's a surprise," said Kojima. He added that his initial reaction was, "Really? Gee. Really?"

However, Kojima, while appreciative of the award, is not a fan of the spotlight. "I don't like to be the center of attention. I like to stay in the background," he said.

"If I wanted to be in front I'd run for something, or run for city council," he continued, "no, I just want to be in the background—just do my little thing and stay out of people's way and just, kind of, be."

While on stage, Kojima held both a thumbs up and peace sign, saying "Good luck to both sides. Thank you."

Post-College Night, that answer has remained the same. When asked if Kojima is a Purple or a Gold, he replied, "Yes I am."

He said that even though he remains neutral, he does not identify as a member of Green Side, saying, "I've never said Green. I'll wear green—you saw the little green shirt I was wearing. I made that this year just for myself just to have it."

All in all, one thing is clear. Kojima is passionate about sports and College Night.

"I've always been a big fan of College Night and I'll talk College Night up. I always have," he said.

He plans to stay connected to College Night and sports for as long as he can, saying he'll stay involved, "As long as they'll have me."

Sex, drugs and rock'n'roll in Politics of Sin

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Dr. Andrea Eckelman, professor of political science at the University of Montevallo, begins one of her classes with this question: "How is it, in a nation, founded on principles of individual liberty, individual responsibility and freedom, that we consistently—or the government consistently—seeks to restrict those freedoms?"

This is the underlying question of her class, The Politics of Sin, a class that focuses on how government policy regulates behavior.

Eckelman became motivated to teach The Politics of Sin after teaching a class on social policy at the University of Houston. The class had two portions that Eckelman focused on: social policy, such as healthcare, welfare and education, and social regulatory policy, which investigates the regulation of behavior.

Once at UM, with space to expand her classes, Eckelman decided to break down her social policy class previously taught at Houston.

"In a social policy class, you can spend an entire semester on healthcare, you can spend an entire semester on education," Eckelman said, "If nothing else, I'll take those three—education, healthcare and welfare—make them their own class and then develop this more, like, morality politics class. And, so, that's how it got started."

Topics such as the economy and education are widely discussed in political science classes, but Eckelman also appreciates the recognition of lesser-known policy decisions.

"Understanding the policy process, and understanding where these topics differ from the ones you tend to hear more about. Right? We hear a lot about the economy, what's going on with the economy. We talk a lot about education, and the state of education. All very important, but at the same time, there's a lot of behavior-regulating going on."

One of Eckelman's focuses in the class is, "Sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, the sex part, and sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, the drugs part," she said. While the phrase typically refers to the lifestyle of rockstars, Eckelman uses it to break down individual topics of regulatory policy.

When looking at regulatory policy about sex, Eckelman says she features topics such as abstinence-only sex education, sex trafficking and sex work, abortion and family planning and child marriage. For drug-related regulatory policy, prohibition, the War on Drugs and the opioid crisis are all points of analysis.

The class's formal breakdown includes, as well as a midterm and final exam, two reflection papers and a policy brief. The reflection papers give students a chance to reflect on the new knowledge that they have learned in the class, and whether their beliefs or opinions have adjusted based on new material.

"I would say that nearly every topic we cover in class, someone will encounter at some point in their life."

The goal of the policy brief is, "to think like a researcher trying to communicate this information to a lawmaker, to a policymaker," said Eckelman. Students are able to choose a topic that sparks interest or meaning to them for the brief, such as gambling or the use of marijuana.

"Ultimately, you do a presentation but you also create a policy brief, which is the kind of handout you would hand, like if you were to go down to Montgomery, and walk into our representative's office and say 'I care very much about gambling in the state of Alabama, and here is my research on that,'" she said.

With the policy brief, students are able to directly simulate what it is like to be a part of the process that creates policy. For Eckelman, she sees sex, and the regulation of sex, as her favorite topic of regulation in the class.

"My favorite is talking about regulation of sex, and sort of the historical background," she continued, "Historically, how have we treated sex broadly?"

As for students, she notes that recent policy changes have made a mark on campus, specifically the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which in 1973 made access to an abortion a constitutional right. The amendment was overturned in 2022 with Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization.

"Given the general mood on campus and with students in the wake of Dobbs, I think that, perhaps, abortion and family planning might be one of the more impactful subjects this go-around," Eckelman said.

However, despite favorite topics of interest, which can differ from student to student, Eckelman justifies that the class as a whole is beneficial to all students.

"I would say that nearly every topic we cover in this class, someone will encounter at some point in their life," she said.

Understanding how previous policies have evolved and failed, such as the failure to completely prohibit the use of alcohol during prohibition, is key to understanding current policy and how future changes may affect the standings of today. Eckelman believes that taking The Politics of Sin is also a way to investigate government systems in general.

"Sure, you can live your life without diving into these policies, but understanding how we have gotten to the point that we are at is really important. I think it's also important, for just, broader questions about our government," said Eckelman.

"These are just really worthwhile considerations and questions to ask ourselves," she added.

The Politics of Sin will be offered every third spring, with the next availability coming in 2027.

Meet Mr. and Ms. Montevallo

By KENDALL MURRAY.



Stephen Haymond and Abby Truitt winning the titles of Mr. and Ms. Montevallo. Photo courtesy of Haymond.

As part of this years's College Night festivities, Stephen Haymond and Abby Truitt were announced as the winners of this year's Mr. And Ms. Montevallo titles.

Crowning a Mr. and Ms. Montevallo is an annual tradition, meant to honor two senior UM students who embody the spirit of Montevallo. Students are nominated during the fall semester, and voted on by the student body leading up to College Night.

Originally from Huntsville, Ala., Haymond shared his journey of transferring from Brigham Young University in Utah to the University of Montevallo, where he found a sense of belonging and a second home.

"I don't know, just in terms of Montevallo, this is like a second home to me," said Haymond.

Haymond described a circuitous path to Montevallo, saying, "So I took a break, and then COVID happened and I took a longer break and ended up here," said Haymond.

Haymond points towards his involvement in Montevallo's Greek life and theatre as part of what makes Montevallo his home.

"I was Alpha Kappa Lambda's secretary until this last January which, I very much enjoyed," he said.

He's been involved with several theatre productions, including last year's production of "The Lightning Thief," and has also been on Gold Side's cast.

"I feel like Saturday itself just felt like a perfect night, similar to my Montevallo experience."

Truitt, similarly, has found Montevallo to be a second home as her family moved from Illinois to Florida after her high school graduation, before relocating again to Virginia. The bonds she has formed with her sorority sisters have embodied the Movevallo spirit.

"After I graduated—that was during COVID—me and my family moved to Florida, and then recently we moved to Virginia in my sophomore year," said Truitt.

Truitt shared her experience as a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority and Gold Side for the past 4 years at Montevallo.

"My sorority, all my sisters, I know I could call any of them whenever I need them, and they would always be there, and I'd be there for them as well," said Truitt.

For Haymond and Truitt, both members of Gold Side's cast, this College Night season was a huge success, as Gold Side cinched a victory and they were crowned Mr. And Ms. Montevallo.

"I feel like Saturday itself just felt like a perfect night similar to my Montevallo experience, Just very much like the Gold Victory and being part of that show and just putting all that time into that, having that pay off and then becoming Mr. Montevallo," said Haymond.

Spectrum hosts drag bingo event

By ASHLEY WILLIAMS.



JoAnn Crawford and Pluto Stardust, hosts of Spectrum's Drag Bingo. Photo by Ashley Williams.

On Feb. 27, Spectrum invited students for a night of bingo in Farmer Hall at 6 p.m., where drag artists performed on stage. Spectrum is a student organization dedicated to supporting the LGBTQ+ community on UM's campus. They seek to provide a positive, comfortable environment for those who want to learn, grow and freely express themselves.

At the event, drag performers JoAnn Crawford and Pluto Stardust served as hosts and performers.

Stardust started the show with a lip sync to "I'm Just Pete" by Pete Davidson. Later, Stardust and Crawford did a duet lip sync to "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell. To end the show, Crawford did a lip sync performance of Cher's "Dark Lady."

Afterwards, the audience played four rounds of bingo. Winners were given a choice of a bag of candy or a light up ball as a prize. During the rounds, Crawford entertained the audience with jokes and celebrity impressions.

During the third round of bingo, she asked the audience trivia questions, and those who got a question right were able to receive candy or a ball as well.

For Crawford, the goal of Spectrum is to provide events and safe spaces for queer students.

"Being queer is beautiful, being queer is fun. It's not queer people who make being queer awful, it's conservatives and homophobic people who make being queer hard," Crawford said.

According to her, Safe Zone Training is a great way to support the LGBTQ+ community on UM's campus, where educators are taught how to support queer students.

"I feel like that would be really good for the general populace also, especially now that we have noticed an uptick of slurs on campus. It's getting really scary to be queer in Alabama especially. Just recently, there's a Senate bill that could potentially wipe away this club on campus," she said.

Crawford believes doing drag is harmless and many people are blowing it out of proportion, as states around the country seek to criminalize drag performances.

"They're trying to define what drag is and make it criminal and that itself is a criminal idea because it's violating so many people's First Amendment rights," she said.

What Crawford wants people to take away from this event is to have fun and laugh, because her view on life is to laugh more than to suffer.

According to Stardust, community makes drag important to him.

"Being your true authentic self without people judging you in a safe place is really important and that's why I do what I do, cause I know that I can be myself and nobody would judge me," he said.

For people who are considering doing drag, he advises them to just do it.

"It's like a euphoric transformation. You don't really know it until you do it and I think that you will feel more free and happier as a person," Stardust said.

He also says people can show their support of local drag artists by going to drag shows and boosting the performers on social media and online.

"Research how you can help keep local drag alive because all of these bills are passing and it's scary for drag performers. So go out and do the best you can do," Stardust said.

Dalton Brown, a mass communications major, was one of the bingo winners at the event, where he learned that multiple students on campus are interested in drag. He said the main reasons he wanted to attend UM was because of the LGBTQ+ community and that he wants to be a part of celebrating them in every way.

"It shows that there are organizations on campus that are still showing up and having a space on this campus that celebrates people just being themselves with fun, entertaining events. I'm excited to see what other events they come up with that are as great, if not better than this one," Brown said.

Athlete's perspective on College Night

By DREW ROBERTS.

It was a temperate November morning in Lakeland, Fla. I, along with the rest of my teammates, had just competed in the Division II Cross Country South Regional Championship. We waltzed down Main Street in our team-issued hoodies. By chance, there was a bustling farmer's market lining the streets, and, by an even greater chance, we ran into a Montevallo alum.

As soon as she saw us, she beamed with excitement. After all, Montevallo's student body isn't exactly large. I think it's more likely for you to make it your entire tenure without tripping on the bricks than it is for you to run into an alum in another state.

"Are you Purple or are you Gold?" she asked, on the verge of falling over as she leaned in for an answer.

We shrugged. We were all Green. We were athletes.

I've had many experiences similar to this one. It's the standard question any Montevallo student gets asked. For the longest time I responded that I didn't care. I arrived at Montevallo in the Fall of 2020, and nothing about that year was normal. That means College Night, the university's most time-honored tradition, didn't leave much of an impact on me.

Truth be told, my first College Night experience was this year's show. I'd been tasked with capturing footage for the Vallo Vision News broadcast, and on that Sweet Saturday evening in Palmer Auditorium, I finally got to see what all the fuss was about.

I'll preface my thoughts on the shows by saying that for my entire life, I have not liked musical theater. That's putting it lightly. I can't give you a solid, concrete reason as to why. It's more of a visceral gut reaction of disinterest.

My story is not unlike others, but why is that the case? Why does there seem to be such an unspoken divide between those of us who compete for the school and those who do not?

That changed after College Night. From the opening song of Purple Side's "Pleasant Vanished," I was entranced. Gold Side's "To Live and To Die" gripped me with its emotional poignancy, and ultimately left me a little stunned. In both shows, I was amazed by the choreography, music, lighting, acting, script and any other aspect made all the more impressive by the production's amateur nature.

I just kept thinking, "This is what my peers are capable of," and it recontextualized everything. By everything, I mean going to school at Montevallo. I felt like a new side of it had been revealed to me, something that, as an athlete, I'd missed out on for far too long.

My story is not unlike others, but why is that the case? Why does there seem to be such an unspoken divide between those of us who compete for the school and those who do not?

A lot of it comes down to time. College athletics eats up a lot of it. Not only do I have the course load of a full-time student, but I also have to run something to the tune of 80 to 85 miles each week. Along with being the co-director of Catholic Campus Ministry, that doesn't leave me with a lot of free time. I don't know how I could have fit College Night into that schedule. That's just with running, as well. Our quaint university is home to a whopping 25 sports, meaning a good chunk of the student body also have a hectic schedule.

Many of these athletes also belong to teams whose coaches won't allow them to compete in the athletic side of College Night. I can certainly see the reason for wanting to avoid injury, but it adds yet another caveat to the already dubious prospect of athletes participating in College Night.

Really, I just worry that we're fracturing ourselves into two different Montevallos. At the risk of painting with a broad brush, the theatrically-inclined and athletically-inclined populations don't really mix. I walk into the Caf and see this quite clearly. By and large, athletes sit with their fellow teammates. There's nothing wrong with this. It is the community that college promises, but still, you don't see much overlap.

College Night deserves to be experienced, participated in and celebrated. This may seem obvious to non-athletes reading this, but it's still worth saying. There's obviously no chance of College Night leaving anytime soon, but with the amount of sports we've added, I just hope we don't dilute it, making it seem reserved for only part of the student body.

If I'm to leave you with a final message, I'll let it be this. To my fellow athletes, go to College Night. Participate if your schedule allows. Don't let this one-of-a-kind tradition pass you by. To my non-athletes, support our sports. Come to our games, matches and meets with fervor and pride for your school. This idea of a united front may seem idealistic, but I'm graduating soon. I want to believe in my soon-to-be alma mater.

At Montevallo, there's a beauty and complementarity to our sports and our artistry. I don't see why we can't have both.



I am disappointed in local pet owners

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

If you read our last issue, you probably saw a very wordy article I wrote about Shelby Humane's issues with capacity.

There was a lot more that I wanted to say in that story. Honestly, it could've been well over 2,000 words. I spent about three hours in the shelter doing my research, and if I hadn't been crunched for time due to College Night, I would've stayed longer. There are so many stories there that I think need to be told.

I can't stop thinking back to a specific cat that I saw in one of the kennels as Interim Executive Director Saundra Ivy took me on a tour of the shelter. He was a beautiful orange cat who had just recently arrived at the shelter.

He was also extremely depressed.

He had been surrendered by his long-term owner just a day before, and he allegedly had not eaten anything since the start of his stay. He also allegedly had not moved from his spot in hours. I remember watching one of the shelter employees trying to coax him to eat. By the time I had left, she had not had any success.

When people surrender their pets, I can't help but wonder if they take the animal's mental wellbeing into consideration. I tend to be overly empathetic—often to the point that it borders on weakness—but I think empathy is important to keep in mind in these situations. Imagine you're happy and well-adjusted in a home with a family. All of the sudden, seemingly at no fault of your own, they give you away, leaving you alone in a cage. How would you react?

According to Ivy, it can take up to six months to get these animals past the grief period that they experience after being surrendered.

This is a far too common occurrence. During my interview with Ivy, she explained to me that owners have surrendered their pets three times more frequently in 2023 than they did in 2022.

I was also informed that, frequently, owners are shocked to discover that there is a fee to surrender pets to Shelby Humane.

They don't want to pay for it. They don't want to take responsibility for their own, often selfish, decisions. However, there's much to be taken into consideration financially. Animal care isn't cheap—especially veterinary costs, which Shelby Humane has to pay for the animals that they take in.

I don't want to imply that I believe all owner surrenders are for selfish reasons. There are, of course, plenty of other reasons why someone may no longer be able to care for a beloved pet. But, all too frequently, owner surrenders are caused by a simple lack of care.

However, the issue doesn't stop with owner surrenders.

I believe that the root of the problem is simple: people keep getting pets despite not being willing to be responsible pet owners.

Almost every day in various local Facebook groups, I see people who are in search of the owners of animals that they have found. Frequently, owners will reply, insisting that their animals are fine to roam freely.

I don't understand why people would choose to be pet-owners when they clearly aren't willing to take responsibility for their animals.

It is not possible for a pet to safely roam freely and unsupervised. You never know what could happen. They could get hit by a car, get in a fight with another animal or even simply get lost. There's never any guarantee that they'll come back.

There is a lot that I could say on this subject, but for the sake of being concise, and not venturing into territories that could be considered "mean", I'll leave it at that.

Being a pet-owner is not just a privilege, but a responsibility. Consider this before committing to pet ownership.

Montevallo's spring has sprung

BY ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

When you think of Montevallo, tourist attractions might not be the first thing to come to mind, but, every spring, hundreds of people travel to the city to stroll the colorful isles of the Festival of Tulips.

The festival is put on every spring by The American Village. Preparation begins months in advance by planting thousands of tulip bulbs that begin to bloom in late February and reach peak bloom in early March.

The fields are covered with dozens of rows of a variety of tulips. Pink, purple, red, orange and yellow tulips are available for $2 each plus $5 for admission.

Photos of Tulip Festival by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.







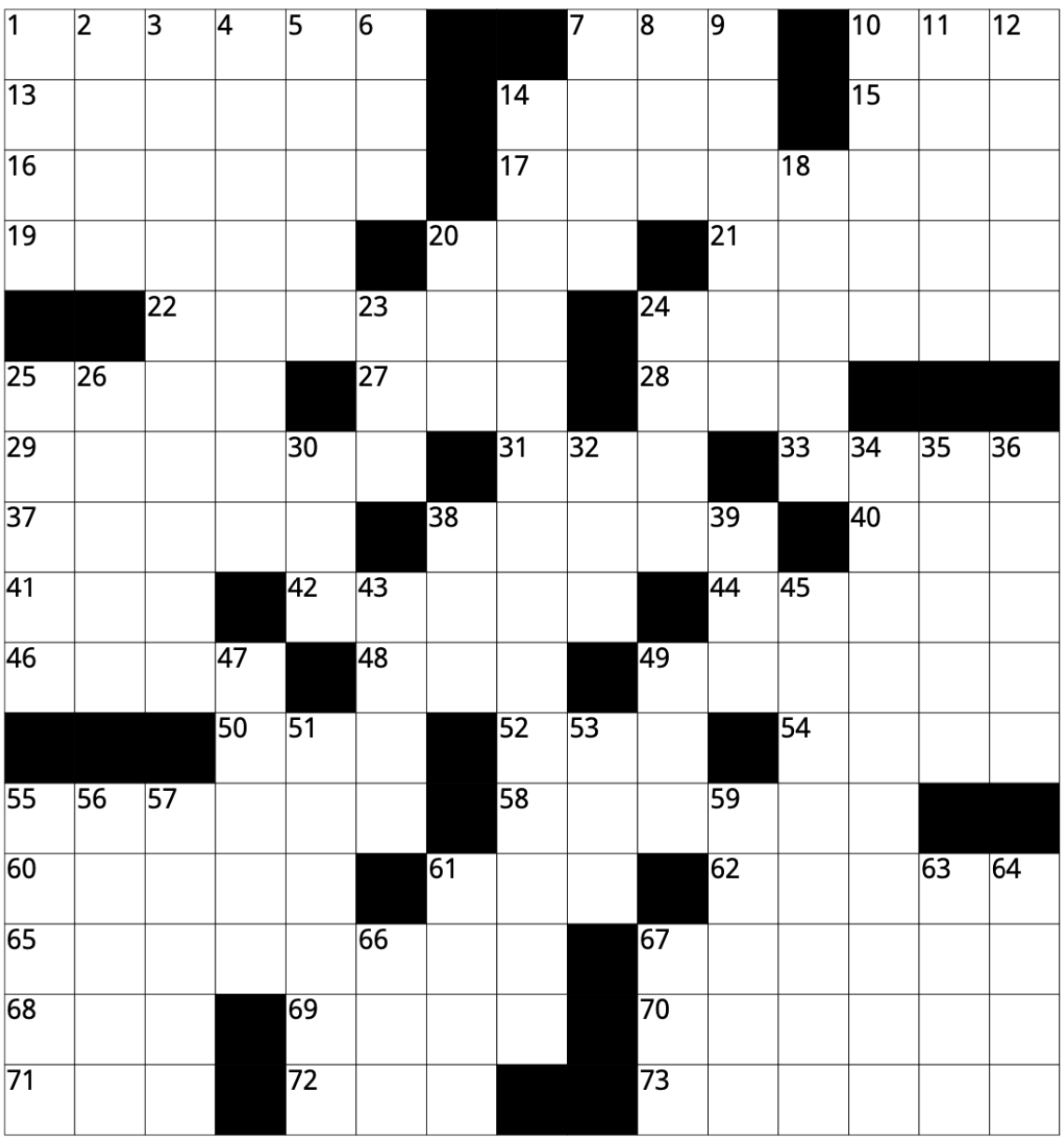






Crossword: The truth is out there...

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Made a run for it
7. ___ Dhabi
10. Org. 16-across and 70-across work for
13. Galápagos creature
14. Van Gogh flower
15. Rembrandt van ___
16. 70-across's investigating partner
17. Sign that hangs from the back of some trucks
19. Absolute
20. Rotten
21. Like marbled meat
22. Shape with equal angles
24. "Why, I _____..."
25. Ballet attire
27. Put away
28. Draft pick
29. Stuck
31. Tater ___
33. Speak hoarsely
37. Shocking weapon
38. Some toy bears
40. Course number
41. Noah's vessel
42. Uppity types
44. "I spy" in Madrid
46. Wall Street inits.
48. Gear for ICU workers
49. Creatures 16-across believes in
50. "SNL" network
52. Irish sea god
54. See
55. Unsolved cases investigated by 16-across and 70-across
58. "_ _____ a lie": phrase to cast suspicion
60. Actress Ana de _____
61. Wager
62. Gaucho's rope
65. Start to Venice and Vienna
67. Fun fact
68. No-win situation
69. Fencing tool
70. 16-across's investigating partner
72. Flop
73. Retina layers

Down:

1. Emu insurance mascot
2. "Bust _ __"
3. Does several things at once
4. Double-checked
5. Año starter
6. ___ es Salaam
7. Desert-like
8. Auction action
9. Handy
10. Top of an espresso
11. British novelist, A.S.
12. "Pose" actress Moore
14. Phrase often uttered by 16-across
18. Stein contents
20. Feathery accessory
23. Understand
24. Vow
25. Saturn's largest moon
26. Having one component
30. Speaker's hesitations
32. Agents like James Bond
34. Capable of being taken to a higher court
35. Peter, Paul or Mary
36. Novel makeup
38. Dad
39. French seasoning
43. Background figures in video games, for short
45. Ingratiated yourself to
47. China's Zhou _____
49. Sleeve filler
51. Outdid
53. Believer's suffix
55. Knife brand
56. "_____ not": slangy denial
57. Louvre Pyramid architect
59. Writer Jong
61. Ran in the wash
63. Bias
64. "Right back __ __!"
66. "Simpsons" shopkeeper
67. Hissed disapproval

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Aries:

The weather is heating up and so is your passion for ornithology, Aries. Take the time to enjoy a sunny spring day by getting your bird watching carreer off the ground.

Taurus:

You've tackled midterms, now its time to tackle some middle schoolers, Taurus. Join up with your local kids in their improptu football games. Remember, two hand touch is for cowards.

Gemini:

Its time to drag yourself out of the depths of despair, Gemini. Do this by dragging yourself into the depths of some local tunnels or caves. I see stalagtites and stalagmites as a new passion of yours.

Cancer:

Get in touch with your namesake, Cancer. Crabs! Whether you are boiling some delicious king crab with your neighbors or scowering the seashores for new species of crustaceans, crabs will be the key to your health and wealth.

Leo:

Rediscover your childhood love for biting off a tasty little morcel of scented eraser, Leo. Only a little bit, as a treat, of course.

Virgo:

I see a few new connections in your life, Virgo. Important ones, on LinkedIn. Make sure your page is looking spiffy, because job opportunities are coming your way.

Libra:

Moth balls. They are important, Libra. The hord is coming and you better make sure you are protected.

Scorpio:

You better leave your deadbolt unlocked and have a credit card handy, Scorpio. I see you losing your keys in the near future. But don't fret, it's simply an opportunity to hone your lockpicking skills.

Sagitarrius:

It's no coincidence Sagitarrius sounds a whole heck of a lot like Secretariat. During your spring break, you will become a very prominent jockey or a very prominent racehorse. It could really play out either way.

Capricorn:

Make sure to pay extra attention to your local squirrels, Capricorn, for they are paying great attention to you. I'm not sure what their plots entail, but be ready regardless.

Aquarius:

Love has a face, Aquarius, and its wrinkly and cute as all get out. During spring break you will fall head over heels for your new best friend: an elderly sphinx cat. Make sure to be attentive in caring to its dermatological needs as well as your own.

Pisces:

Chicago calls to you this spring break, Pisces, and you will discover new and exciting intellectual opportunities while there. May the only thing deeper than your dishes be your thoughts.

The Alabamian is hiring for next year!

If you're looking to gain valuable publication-related work experience, consider applying for an editorial position. Open positions include: Assistant Business Manager, Copy Editor, News Editor, Graphic Designer and more!

Applications will be posted on FalconLink, or can be accessed by scanning the QR code below.

The Alabamian

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Born to be a Falcon

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Cali Smallwood. Courtesy of UM Athletics Dept.

The Falcons women's basketball team has had its share of elite talent on the court, but superstar freshman Cali Smallwood is different.

The Gulf South Conference Freshman of the Year was destined to play basketball for the Falcons.

The Blountsville native arrived on the bricks this fall following in her mother's footsteps. Natasha Smallwood played basketball for the Purple and Gold in the late 90s, and is still recorded as having the third best three-point percentage in a single season.

Smallwood was also coached by her mom at Susan Moore High School, where she played in the AHSAA 3A State Championship game her junior year.

After visiting the campus and meeting with the team and coaches, Smallwood was sold.

"I was just looking for good, down-to-earth people," she said. She found just that in Falcons women's basketball.

However, before her collegiate career could even begin, the Falcons went through a massive change in the offseason. Former head coach Gary Van Atta announced his retirement from coaching in June.

Van Atta was the winningest coach in program history, boasting a career record of 244-161 during 14 seasons with UM.

"I remember I was outside at my house during the summer, and he texted on one of our group chats and said 'Everybody get on this Zoom call," said Smallwood, "It shocked me at first."

Smallwood had been looking forward to playing for Van Atta because of his successful coaching career and to be able to play for a male coach, which is something she hadn't been able to experience before.

Van Atta's departure left some big shoes to fill, but there was no one better fit for the job than Olivia Chapman.

Chapman had served as an assistant coach during Van Atta's last season, and was promoted to the head coaching position in July, shortly after his retirement was announced.

"I just really enjoyed being around Coach O," said Smallwood, who was still excited to play for the Falcons despite the change.

Before the season began, the team had to grind through a tough preseason orchestrated by Coach Chapman.

"All of the older girls that had Coach Van Atta their entire life said that this was the hardest preseason they've ever had before," said Smallwood.

However difficult it was, she felt that all of the training she had done with her mom throughout high school prepared her well for what Montevallo's preseason put her through.

"We were up at 5:15 three days a week…we would have basketball in the gym, at the track running, and then we would have weights," she said.

The team built up chemistry during this time, which put them in a good place to start off the regular season strong, according to Smallwood.

Smallwood averaged 12.4 points and 6.1 rebounds per game and ranked in the top 15 in the conference in nearly every offensive statistic.

The shooting guard also shot 35% from three-point range, which ranked fourth in the GSC, but one of those three-pointers stood out above the rest.

"The West Georgia game winner I hit…that was pretty cool," she said.

With the game tied at 63-all and 1.3 seconds left on the clock, Montevallo had possession of the ball. A play was drawn up during a timeout to make the West Georgia players think graduate student Marisa Snodgrass would take the final shot. Snodgrass is another incredible talent for the Falcons and a Second-Team All-GSC selection this season, but the ball would instead go to Smallwood.

"I catch the ball out there and I turned and I shot it and when I shot it I was like, 'Holy crap, that looks good.'"

Smallwood said she couldn't believe it when it went in, and the Falcons won on the road, 66-63. The game was even more special to her because her family was able to be there.

The Falcons posted a 13-14 record this year, just missing out on a spot in the conference tournament.

Smallwood is looking to improve on the team's win percentage for next year.

"I know there were some games we let go at the end, especially at home," she said.

Smallwood said she learned a lot about herself during her freshman campaign.

"I wasn't expecting to come in and win Freshman of the Year or play the minutes I play and have a starting position," she said.

She said that the accolade means a lot to her, and she's proud of herself for putting the conference on notice this year.

"I just know that if I put the work in then it comes back to me," she said.

Falcons women's basketball will be back in action in late November.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Spotlight on student research at UR Day

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Anakin Burdick at UR Day. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

Student researchers filled Harman Hall as the University of Montevallo hosted its 26th annual Undergraduate Research Day on March 13.

Undergraduate Research Day is an annual event at the university, where students who have undertaken and conducted undergraduate research projects throughout the academic year get to present their work to the public. Researchers can present their research via an oral presentation session, where the researcher presents their findings in a lecture, or via a poster presentation, where the researcher presents their findings on a poster that the audience can pursue and ask the researcher about.

This year's Undergraduate Research Day featured 27 student researchers, who represented 13 different disciplines and were mentored by 19 different faculty advisers.

Anakin Burdick, a theatre major, completed her undergraduate research with theatre professor Kyle Everett. Her project focused on creating puppets to portray the giant moving plant, named Audrey II, for a staging of the musical "Little Shop of Horrors."

Since Audrey II grows throughout the show, Burdick created four different puppets, designing them in ways that also allow puppeteers to show Audrey II's emotions and attitudes. Burdick explained one puppet, the smallest of the Audrey II puppets, is rigged with fishing line to allow for a puppeteer to raise and lower Audrey II's leaves to make it look as though the plant is wilting with emotion.

Burdick said a lifelong love of puppets pushed her to pursue this project.

"I've always had a really big interest in puppets," Burdick said, adding, "I grew up on 'Sesame Street.' From there, it evolved into Muppets, 'Labyrinth,' things like that."

In her course work, Burdick focuses on costuming, but she didn't see why that should stop her from exploring puppetry.

"There's sort of a blurred line between costuming and props where puppetry falls. And so, I sort of wanted to play around with it," she said.

Burdick pointed out that there isn't a lot of opportunity to work on designing puppets in collegiate theatre spaces, saying, "Most people will just rent them or commission someone to make them."

This lack of opportunity pushed Budick to pursue undergraduate reaseach.

"I would love to work in puppets, and I didn't see any other opportunity to do it," she said. "So I approached one of my professors and I said, 'I want to build a puppet,' and he said, 'Great news, they have a thing for that. Let's do undergraduate research.' And I said, 'Okay.'"

Burdick's work was a change of pace from some of the more science- and humanities-based research projects that were also presented at Undergraduate Research Day.

"I feel a tiny bit out of place," she confessed, referencing the other presenters.

But telling others about her project helped Burdick feel more at ease and confident.

"People have been really excited to see it, they think it's really cool, which makes me feel good about myself," she said.

Another presenter, Ricari Thomas, also presented art-focused research at Undergraduate Research Day. Thomas, who completed his research with art professor Michael Willett, focused on the benefits of practicing blind contour drawing.

"I wanted to demonstrate how beneficial blind drawing is as an exercise for artists and non-artists alike," Thomas said about his project.

For his project, Thomas created 18 blind contour drawings of a wine glass. Thomas would spend two minutes on each drawing, drawing the figure without seeing what he was drawing. With each new drawing, the wine glass would become more distinctive and less abstract.

Thomas pointed out that practicing blind contour drawing helps improve hand-eye coordination, motor skills and muscle memory, while also helping the practitioner become a better artist.

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Art seniors showcase work

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifesyles editor.

Every year, bachelors of arts and science senior art majors at the University of Montevallo line the gallery walls in Bloch Hall with their artwork.

This annual showcase gives senior art students the chance to showcase the skills they've developed during their time at UM by displaying their paintings, drawings, graphic design, photography, sculptures and other art.

Family and friends of the seniors were greeted with refreshments as they filled the gallery on March 14 to show their support.

The work will remain on display for students in the gallery on the bottom floor of Bloch Hall.



Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.



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Book Swap: Spreading literary joy

By KENDALL MURRAY.

On March 13, the Book and Writing Club, led by club president Carly Harrelson, hosted an event where attendees could bring their used books and trade them for others.

The club also planned to donate the remaining books to local libraries.

"We got a bunch of books here that we have read and have already read. And then we have brought them here so other people can bring their books and swap them out and hopefully find a book," said Harrelson

Harrelson highlighted the goal for the book swap. She hoped attendees would be able to find a new book they wanted to read.

"Hopefully people can just find a new book they like and are interested in and maybe even find some new favorite books," said Harrelson,

The Book and Writing Club plans to donate the leftover books from the Book Swap to local libraries, hoping to spread literary joy and give others the opportunity to discover new favorite books.

"The leftover books, we're going to go to the little public, like the little libraries that are just random across town, and put the leftover books in there," said Harrelson.

The Book and Writing Club is a student organization for people who are interested in reading and writing.

The club meets on Wednesdays in person and Saturdays on Zoom from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Harrelson is hopeful for the future of the Book and Writing Club to have more members and continue to grow.

Harrelson said the group is open to anyone interested in books and writing to join, saying, "So it's basically for people who are interested in those kinds of things or want to know, learn more, and it's open to everybody."

"I like that it's a small, cozy group of people, but hopefully we will have some more people join," said Harrelson.

Spotlight on student research at UR Day cont.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

"I wanted to show that anyone can learn how to draw doing this blind drawing exercise with any object, he said, adding, "It can really be the best observation drawing technique—or, one of the best—that you can do."

Like Burdick, Thomas turned a fascination into a project.

"I wanted to do a project on blind contours because I just thought they were so fascinating," he said. "Back in 2021, I just started doing a lot of these in my sketchbooks, and I just fell in love with the exercise altogether."

As for his Undergraduate Research Day experience, Thomas described getting to talk to people about his research as, "really amazing."

"I thought I would be a bit nervous, but I feel really relaxed. I feel really great about this. I love all the hard work I've put into this, and I'm so glad people like this," he said.

While Thomas aimed to draw attention to an artistic exercise, Jasmine Hall, a social work and sociology double major who conducted her research with social work professor Dr. Brendan Beal, aimed to draw attention to a local issue with her research. Hall, in her project, focused on how Montevallo students perceive homelessness.

For her research, Hall surveyed 100 Montevallo students, aiming to measure their attitudes on causes of homelessness, remedies for homelessness and overall perceptions of homelessness. She said the results showed positive attitudes towards homeless people, but also showed a lack of knowledge about community homelessness.

Hall said she was surprised that surveyed students pointed towards larger causes, such as social issues, as causes for homelessness, but that less respondents identified fixing these large issues as part of a way to alleviate homelessness.

"I thought it was interesting because it showed that even though people seem to understand that homelessness has multiple causes going into it, and a lot of it has got to do with, like, macro issues—not necessarily anything within the homeless people's control—there's not, like, an easy way to fix it or, like, a lot of knowledge about how to even go about assisting fixing those policies."

Hall said she was drawn to working on this project because of her experiences interacting with homeless individuals.

"Growing up, I had a couple of, like, interesting experiences where, like, my mom was—my mom, like, took in a few homeless people," Hall said. "So, like, I kind of saw it from that perspective of, like, interacting with them."

Hall said her personal experience staying in a shelter also compelled her to pursue this research.

"I've stayed in a domestic violence shelter before for a few days," she said, "And, even then, it's not a permanent residence, it's not the safest. It's very overcrowded, you always have to watch your stuff, because desperate people are going to do things to survive."

Hall said she enjoyed getting to draw attention to local homelessness issues by presenting her research at Undergraduate Research Day. Hall pointed out that the Shelby County's homeless rate is 11.96%.

"In a place like Montevallo, you don't see a lot of homeless people like you would see in a place like New York or California," Hall said. "But, like, there's a very good likely chance that people are couch surfing or they're staying in their cars—living in their cars."

She added, "About every one out of ten in the county are homeless, and I thought it was really interesting because you don't really see it with your eyes a lot."

Council discusses markers and design board

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

The Montevallo City Council discussed a proposed historic marker for Epsibeth Missionary Baptist Church during their March 11 meeting.

The marker was proposed as part of Montevallo's African American Heritage Trail, a project run by the Montevallo Historic Commission, seeking to highlight locations important to the history of Montevallo's Black population.

"I think it's the second oldest church—Black church—in this area. It is well over 150 years old, and Rev. Lorenzo Mitchell is the pastor currently there now," council member Kenneth Dukes said about the church, adding, "It's only had, I think, less than seven pastors in its entire existence. He's been there a long time. Matter of fact, I was baptized by him when I was small enough for somebody to let me down and not drown you."

"It is a very historic church and—and so, it's being recognized as one of the historical markers. It's still the original parts of the original church that was originally constructed. So, we get the opportunity to add it to our African American Heritage Trail with a marker that will be placed there," Dukes said.

The council voted unanimously to approve the marker.

Montevallo Mayor Rusty Nix read an award proclamation honoring the late Derrick A. Lilly. Lilly, was born in Alabaster in 1975, and served 21 years in the United States Marine Corps. Lilly then worked at Montevallo's post office from 2001 until he passed away on Feb. 20.

"For the last 22 years Lilly became a familiar face in the community, who was liked and respected among his coworkers, friends and those frequently in the post office," Nix said.

"To share the awareness of Derrick A. Lilly's contributions to Montevallo and our country; I, Mayor Rusty Nix, do hereby proclaim, recognize and celebrate his service," Nix said.

Members of Lilly's family were in attendance and received recognition from the council as well.

Executive Director of the Montevallo Chamber of Commerce Adele Nelson said, "I want to thank the mayor and council for honoring Derrick, and this is a proclamation that will go down in Montevallo recorded history."

UM's SGA Director of Social Services Caleb Jernigan addressed the council and meeting attendees with information regarding The Big Event. The Big Event is SGA's annual community service event set to be held on April 6.

Jernigan said, "The Big Event is an opportunity for the student body of the University of Montevallo to give back to the people of Montevallo. Basically, organizations from campus—lacrosse teams, fraternities, sororities—will come down and help clean up businesses, houses, things like that—anything that doesn't require a power tool, pretty much."

"I encourage all of you to sign up. These students want to work. It is completely free. You do not have to pay a dime. This is free labor," Jernigan said.

Jernigan offered sign-up sheets for meeting attendees looking to have work done on their properties.

The council was scheduled to vote on the reappointment of Courtney Bennett to the Design Review Committee, but council member David King motioned to postpone the appointment, as well as the next Design Review Committee meeting set to be held March 12, until after the council's next meeting.

"I had a constituent approach me today about some concerns about the board appointments in the Design Review Committees," King said.

"I would like to make a motion to postpone this reappointment until such time as we can take a look at ensuring that the appropriate number of people are on the Design Review Committee. I know that we are currently reviewing some items that are controversial and I think it would be prudent if this council would hold off for just a minute," King said, continuing, "Now I want to make a comment, I have no issue whatsoever with Courtney Bennett, or anyone else on that board."

Nix said to King that the board was meant to have five members and currently has four.

King responded, "I had something brought up to me because they are reviewing a particular item that, as I know, is a hot topic item."

"All I'm saying is for prudence, so that somebody doesn't invalidate a decision that's made by the Design Review Committee, we need to delay that meeting for a couple weeks. We need to delay this appointment until we can push this appointment—not push—until we can vote on this appointment after legal counsel verifies that that committee is indeed where it's supposed to be," said King.

The council voted 5-1 to postpone the vote and next Design Review Committee meeting, with Nix abstaining.

Montevallo Police Chief Jeremy Littleton thanked members of the Montevallo Middle School Leaders of Tomorrow for attending the council meeting. Littleton also announced that the group held a mock council meeting of their own earlier in the day, in addition to touring the Montevallo Fire and Police Departments and UM.

The program's advisor, Matthew Williams, explained its purpose, saying, "It's a group that we start in 6th grade, and we look for students who show leadership in the schools and in the classroom and our goal is to hone in on those skills and help develop leaders as we go throughout—throughout their middle school years."

"So, we take them on different field trips. We go to the Civil Rights Institute. We go all around Montevallo. We've been on Main Street and just interact with different leaders in the community to hone in on those skills, and, if you can see, it's working well because you have someone on the MJCC that was in LOT last year. And you got a lot of good candidates back there coming up that can be in MJCC coming up as well," Williams said.

The next city council meeting will be held Monday, March 25, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.



Purple Side Scores

Judge 1

Great job by both Purple and Gold Teams! This was not an easy year to judge and for that I am grateful that both teams truly brought their "A- Game."

"Pleasant Vanished" Response (Purple Team)

Let me say that I absolutely loved the unique storyline and at the very first, I asked myself "Is this something that really happened but I missed it because it's took place in another part of the country?" Which I have to say speaks well for getting mine and other audience members attention from the get-go of the show.

There are so many great things to praise on this piece. The strong voices were showcased so well during the show and the moments of harmony were lovely. The choreography was impressive and complimented the artists and production.

The direction created a free-flowing show that kept us on our feet ready for what would happen next and more. In fact, I loved how smoothly this piece ran. Also, the use of levels and keys events that moved through the audience truly created an eerie experience for the characters and we as an audience.

One aspect worth noting is that the Ensemble worked so well with one another and were focused on creating a good show and while I understand that there is a competition at play – creating a good show makes for the best experience for everyone who gets to see your great work. With that said, thank you for the great show focus!

I liked the technical elements that included hints of 80s hairstyles and clothes balanced with contemporary characters looking back on past events. The lighting and set all played a huge part in making the show successful. The props were just the right pieces for the show but I would kick myself if I didn't acknowledge how AMAZING the Cotton Candy looked in the piece. I loved it!

There are a few things that I want to offer to build your work for the future. The first is when working with the microphones it is always a challenge to find the right levels that are not too low but also not too loud. There were a few times where I missed dialogue because the microphone may have been close to the performers mouth so I was not able to under the words because of the sound quality. The more one works with this technical issue – the more we learn how to make adjustments with this difficult task.

There were two ideas that came to mind regarding the story. The first was that I wanted to know more how did Viola's diary come into the hands of Carolynn. I felt like this was a huge payoff for another strong reveal and I wanted to see more closure in this part of the story.

Speaking of huge payoff – Seeing Eric get their payback was a ton a fun! One thing that I might suggest would be having him drink the water first and continue to drink it while he tells the story as it means nothing at the time. Later it can be revealed that when Sebastian learned how to recreate the controlling elements in the water, then we find out that our villain has been drinking it during the last moments of the play. When he took the glass of water after sharing the story – we knew where this was going already and I wanted one more surprise.

All in all, this was a great show and I loved it! And one of the main reasons why I loved it is that you made it a point to let the audience see that we were in good hands through the scene transitions. I have already shared that I loved the lighting, set, and props but it was the handling of those things that win us over every time. The transitions had purpose and were well choreographed and seeing that these moments matter to you - takes us further on the pathway of this fun journey and gives us such confidence that we are going to have a good time watching your work. Thanks for making this a priority and doing it so well.

"Pleasant Vanished" was an exciting story/lovely piece where I absolutely enjoyed the performers, the design needs, the original tale, and performance from start to finish. Well done, Purple!

Judge 2

"Perfect in Pleasant" was a great opening with clever staging. Be careful of losing pitch with solo vocalists.

During the opening number, when filling the stage, there was a bit of imbalance when utilizing the stairs. There was a big open space SL, upstage of the DS actors.

"What is True?" – Loved this song. ***A note for both shows – the pit was too loud – with singers battling to be heard***

There were quite a few moments when levels could have been used for songs, even solos…they don't need to move downstage center.

Carolynn had a great energy throughout her performance. Nice acting chops. I was sometimes taken out of a moment when actors would turn downstage to say their lines facing out. We can stay connected to the actors in the scene.

Carolynn's and Viola's first monologues may've been enhanced without playing them out.

Providing variations of 'pictures,' let these monologues take place anywhere on the stage – as opposed to downstage center. "What is True?" (reprise) could have started earlier – as male character exited.

"Left Behind" – Tammy was excellent throughout.

Going into "Pleasant is Magic" – such a fun number and very nice harmonies.

Nice moments with the choreography.

"Who Are You?" – we missed some mic cues and that caused an imbalance in the vocals.

I love the attention to making the set changes interesting and choreographed.

I sort of felt like Eric's song could have taken place after much of the dialogue that followed it. That dialogue built a bit more than what was before the song.

Love the creativity.

In creating the scripts, pay attention to the scenes going into song. There were a couple of moments I felt there could have been more interaction among the characters truly inspiring the movement into song. When staging the smaller scenes, ensure that the crosses actors are making are motivated by the action of the scenes and the characters' wants.

A very creative set, utilizing the Fall Fair to exist as different locations. There were moments when those levels could have heightened the journey in a scene. When Carolynn confronts her mother, I loved the beginning taking place up on the level. Don't be afraid to leave a scene upstage. If it's powerful, it will still make an impact. Carolynn/Mom scene remaining up on the level with some focused lighting would have maintained the strength you were looking for.

The wagon set was really nice but went unused. I see what you're going for with this. Had the table been set directly downstage of the wagon, there would have been a stamp on where we were in the scene. Placing it SR of the set piece was a little distracting. And the confrontation scene at the end could be heightened by placing the three characters in a smaller space – trapping them to face each other. Lovely work by the Ensemble and connecting to their 'citizen' characters. I also enjoyed the choreography – much fun.

There was good attention to costuming and period styles. Some actors' costumes successfully bled from one era to another. Sebastian's jacket was a bit large but not in a distracting manner. And Eric's first costume change between eras was simple and fantastic.

Judge 3

AFFIRMATIONS:

DIRECTING/CHOREOGRAPHY:

-Really Nice opening Tableau.

-Many of the stage pictures were well thought out.

-Really Good director's eye.

-Choreography was very 1985 in the scenes set in the past. Great research.

-I liked how you incorporated the purple "sign."

-Tap number was a nice, polished touch. Great that you had that talent and that you used it.

-Transitions may have been one of my favorite parts of the show. I love a good focused and well-choreographed transition. Unless you are in total black-out, we are watching everything!

-The choreography overall was interesting and well executed by the cast.

SCRIPT/MUSIC/LYRICS:

-The Script was clever. It kept my interest. It also felt like an 80's "horror" film.

- "What is True?" Nice set up song for the whole show.

-Nice poking fun of Gold. I didn't know the inside jokes, but they were still funny to me.

- "Who are you?" sounds very Sondheim inspired!

ACTING:

- "What is True?" Carolynn – nice, supported voice.

-Everyone's energy was super up, and the ensemble work was wonderful.

-Aidan – nice playing age when character is older.

-You guys took the time to listen and respond. I appreciated that. The show didn't get too frantic.

-Nice character work from everyone, particularly jumping back and forth in time.

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS:

-I loved the 80's color scheme. I also liked the use of levels.

-The costumes also had a nice coherent theme.

-All the elements were coherent and seemed to work well together.

WONDERS:

DIRECTING/CHOREOGRAPHY:

-I wonder if a little more attention could have been paid to focus. A couple of times when there were large groups of people on stage, I wasn't always sure where to look.

SCRIPT/MUSIC/LYRICS:

-I wonder if the music could have been lower at times. The music was a bit overpowering, and I had trouble understanding the lyrics.

-I wonder if the script had focused a little more on those that had vanished and less about telling us that you were telling their story. I think the telling the story was obvious.

-I wonder if there could have been a more dramatic inciting incident that caused the father to make such a dramatic choice to run away. Just a thought.

ACTING:

I wonder in "What's is Time? Reprise" why the actor walked backwards while singing. I wonder if it would have been okay just to have the actor turn and cross. (that's a picky note, I know! It just looked so awkward.)

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS:

-I wonder if the upper-level curtain area could have been used for a reveal of some sort. That design choice wasn't very clear to me.

-I wonder if you might have just stuck to the "suggested" locations with just furniture and levels of the main set without wheeling on a realistic room. I think the style of the piece was stronger when the scenery was representative rather than mixing in the realism.

Purple Victory Total Points 2024

	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Points possible
Script	7/10	7.5/10	7/10	21.5/30
Lyrics	8/10	7/10	8/10	23/30
Score	8/10	8/10	7/10	23/30
Direction	8/10	6/10	8/10	22/30
Choreography	8/10	7.5/10	8/10	23.5/30
Acting	8/10	8/10	8/10	24/30
Singing	9/10	7.5/10	8/10	24.5/30
Dancing	9/10	8/10	8/10	25/30
Orchestra	9/10	7.5/10	7/10	23.5/30
Costumes	8/10	8/10	7/10	23/30
Set	8/10	7/10	6/10	21/30
Hair & Makeup	8/10	8/10	8/10	24/30
Props	4/5	5/5	3/5	12/15
Lighting Design	4/5	4/5	4/5	12/15
Running	9/10	9/10	8/10	26/30
Overall Effect of Production	14/15	11.5/15	13/15	38.5/45
Timing				5/5
Production Subtotal	129	119.5	118	366.5/470
Preproduction subtotal				100.1/166
Total Points				471.6/636



Scene from Purple Side show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

Gold Side Scores

Judge 1

This show was a lovely surprise from start to finish! From the top of the piece, it at first appeared to borrow ideas from A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum but then when we are introduced to story of the Gods and Mortals it showed that we were about to truly learn about ourselves and the beauty of life.

The opening piece had such great energy and grabbed the audience immediately and had us wanting more. I loved the staging and choreography, which complimented the opening song and gave a wonderful glimpse into the characters and where we were going.

The costumes, hair, make-up and set pieces were just right and I especially appreciated that some pieces were able to be adjusted to switch performers from the world of the gods and those of the human realm. These transitions helped me to see that we were going to move along with purpose, which I love.

The set (with lighting) created several combinations of warm colors that took on the journey for the four main characters. I would like to suggest way that can help with future pieces – I would consider looking at transitions with a purpose. The blackouts to move pieces caused a stop in the story and while we could see playing with the those onstage finding comedic moments in the shadows – it did break up the flow. If we are leaving the roof top while going to the club or into the coffee shop, then moving from one location to the next while we see the space changing can actually hold our attention. This can be especially true if the transitions are choreographed to find movement for the journey. Sure, we want to know that this is a new location and you did that well with your set pieces. Now trust that we will follow all that you want us to see. You have got this!

Speaking of got this! I know that there were problems with the mics and everyone involved kept their cool and stayed focused on the show. The level of professionalism during the trying moments was fantastic! That's live theatre and you all handled it well. I am certain that you all may have felt that you didn't want to use the microphone in the hand but we all understood and were glad to see the shift for the sake of the show.

I also want to praise the performances of the entire cast for acting, singing, and dancing was treat to watch. I especially enjoyed the four main players performed by Stephen Haymond, Molly Malone, Hannah Mallory, and Jake Manly. I also want to share that I enjoyed the energy from Cole Broadhead weaving in and out throughout the overall storyline. The overall arc of the characters were clear and provided such dimension for every role played in the piece. The focus on acting was clearly important to this show and cast and I loved watching what you did with your work. The objectives to achieve by overcoming your obstacles was apparent by each of you and this was another professional touch that I enjoyed.

This is such a wonderful storyline with a poignant message that reminds us to embrace the day and enjoy all that our lives have to offer. Personally, I think there's room to build on this piece and see where it can go next.

All the best to you, Gold!

Finally, I want to acknowledge how impressive I found the program and front of house for this event. From start to finish – attention was paid to every detail and I appreciate all you have done!

Judge 2

The first moment of the show was absolutely stunning – set, lighting, freezes.

"To Live and to Die" – there were some fantastic harmonies in this number and a great energy from the whole cast. At first, I thought, I am not quite sure what time period we are in but then I left that to a bit of Xanadu meets Head Over Heels.

Morose – Bravo in that opening number! And you maintained a fantastic energy throughout – even when your microphone died….. (to live and die…see what I did there?)

I really enjoyed the lyrics in "To Live and to Die" until "just could be…". I can't quite explain why that line didn't fit with the rest.

Nice variation of stage pictures throughout the opening.

Giving this note to both shows – the Pit was too loud and the singers were battling to be heard*

"Our Purpose" – a lovely song. I felt there were so many opportunities to vary the blocking. The actors don't have to face out for us to connect with them and the story. What kept resounding during the show, in my head – this set is FANTASTIC!! Congrats on the amazing work you all did there.

I feel where we were going with Jack's monologue. Be careful of going too dramatic in presenting a monologue of this sort.

Olive – Great voice, Great actor, Great energy – Hannah's great! Period

Intuvius – Fantastic attention to every character he played in this production – Bravo~

"What We Gotta Do" – I love the construct of this quartet. I just couldn't hear everyone. I don't know if it's because the Pit was too loud or if mic cues were missed?

During the scene at the Onyx – we got the ensemble a little too bunched up SL. They could have been continuously moving about or in and out. I was questioning the motivation of the crosses downstage at the coffee shop. This is such a great scene. We would still have been captivated if the actors remained in the confines of the coffee shop. It's a very important scene in which you need the characters closer together.

Side observation (given to both shows) – Songs/Solos can take place anywhere on the stage. Strive for variations away from downstage center.

Elsya – Really nice voice, but I couldn't always hear her. She had a very nice connection. Would love to see a little more energy in the eyes (trust, this was also told to me as a young actor).

"More than Words" (is this the Farewell?). There were some really great lyrics and I like the composition of this one. You're so smart. There were just a couple of instances when simplicity crept into the lyrics.

For me, the finale could have been even more impactful if the four leads had been upstage – in the heavens where Olive was headed. The ensemble could have been spread throughout the stage level in different poses of levels. The song was so good.

Explore use of different areas of the stage. And I wanted to see a bit more movement in that finale – not dance but movement.

Very nice work on the script, maintaining a solid throughline from scene to scene. For direction – keep exploring using areas of the stage. It felt as if we were trying to use the expanse and the downstage area to emphasize. If we're hooked, we're hooked, no matter where the scene takes place on stage.

Some really fun choreography! I felt some opportunities for variations of stage pictures using the ensemble.

Overall acting – Fantastic by all…especially in the scene into "The Place to Be"

The pace of the scene into "Cloud Nine" felt a little fast. Fun work with the Hair and Makeup and the plethora of costume changes were seamless and put a stamp on each location.

Y'all had a lot of props and I'm giving you PROPS! – Great job!

Excellent Lighting Design and use of the cyc to highlight location and feeling!

I really enjoyed this show – a lot!

Judge 3

Let me just make an overall statement about GOLD. I love how you all love and support one another. I can feel the closeness of this group. Be careful that your enthusiasm and support of one another doesn't overpower the show itself. Sometimes the audience vocal reactions overpowered the actors, and I was not able to hear or understand what was going on in the show. Save the accolades for after songs and in transitions. Don't steal the spotlight from the actors/show.

AFFIRMATIONS:

DIRECTING/CHOREOGRAPHY:

-Really liked the acapella opening.

-I thought the pace was good and the story moved at a good pace.

-Good use of the depth and width of the space.

-The choreography was fun.

-Interesting stage pictures. Good directing eye.

SCRIPT/MUSIC/LYRICS:

- "Everything is going to be Alright" had beautiful harmonies. I really loved that song.

-This was an interesting premise to have both fantastical and yet realistic elements in one show.

-There was some nice music in this show. Kudos to you.

ACTING:

-The relationships between the "earth" characters were very truthful and honest.

-All the big numbers had great energy! Thank you!

-Olive and Jack had real genuine caring moments. When the truth of the "death" is revealed, it was really moving. I saw a "journey" happening with most all the characters.

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS:

-Loved the gold dress!

-There was a consistent use of the design element of a "corset" that worked well.

-The vastness of "heaven" was portrayed well.

-Loved the city scape that was put in place so quickly.

-Liked the use of different columns.

WONDERS:

DIRECTING/CHOREOGRAPHY:

-I wonder if a little more attention could have been paid to focus. A couple of times when there were large groups of people on stage, I wasn't always sure where to look.

-I wonder if more time could have been spent on staging the transitions. It seemed as if the actors were trying to pull focus during the scene changes rather than just getting the job done.

SCRIPT/MUSIC/LYRICS:

-I wonder if the bits of humor could have been a little more witty and less forced.

-I wonder if a different choice could have been made instead of a "fair" in the inner city that it could have been something more "urban."

-I wonder if something bigger could have been written early in the script so that "Heaven" or the "Celestial Place" could have gone awry instead of just the two characters being bored.

ACTING:

-I wonder if a little more time could have been spent working on the vocals. There were a couple of places where the singers could have been a little more confident in their notes.

-I wonder if "Elysa" could have tried backing off the over gesturing and smirking, it seemed a little targeted and forced. She is a fine actor and can trust her comedic timing.

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS:

-I wonder if the costume for the heart patient character could have been a little softer. She looked awfully healthy and tough in her outfit.

-I wonder if there could have been bigger costume/hair choices for the celestial character that was playing all the distinct roles.

Gold Victory Total Points 2024

	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Points possible
Script	9/10	8.5/10	6/10	23.5/30
Lyrics	8/10	8/10	7/10	23/30
Score	9/10	7.5/10	8/10	24.5/30
Direction	8/10	6/10	5/10	19/30
Choreography	9/10	7/10	6/10	22/30
Acting	8/10	8/10	6/10	22/30
Singing	9/10	8.5/10	7/10	24.5/30
Dancing	8/10	7/10	6/10	21/30
Orchestra	9/10	8.5/10	9/10	26.5/30
Costumes	7/10	8/10	5/10	20/30
Set	9/10	10/10	5/10	24/30
Hair & Makeup	8/10	8/10	6/10	22/30
Props	4/5	5/5	3/5	12/15
Lighting Design	4/5	5/5	3/5	12/15
Running	6/10	10/10	6/10	22/30
Overall Effect of Production	14/15	13.5/15	10/15	37.5/45
Timing				5/5
Production Subtotal	129	128.5	98	355.5/470
Preproduction subtotal				141.1/166
Total Points				501.6/636



Scene from Gold Side show. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

‘Dune Pt. 2’ proves why we’re in a renaissance

By CARTER JAMES.

I could be seeing it for a third time instead of writing this review.

People in high school thought I was crazy when I referred to “Dune Pt. 1” as, “the film of the decade.” “Dune Pt. 2” puts the “Dune is boring” crowd to shame. We’re in a film renaissance, and director Denis Villeneuve is one of its heralding artisans.

I know it seems like I’m always calling a big blockbuster the best thing since sliced bread, but the “Dune” movies are entirely different. These are cinematic expressions of the highest order, pushing the boundaries of storytelling and spectacle to deliver something you only see once in a generation. “Star Wars,” “The Lord of the Rings,” “Harry Potter,” “Dune.” What do they all have in common? Sci-fi/fantasy epics? Sure. What made them pop culture touchstones though, was the verisimilitude of filmmaking on display. They’re all-encompassing and immersive experiences, that left a lasting mark on us all. “Dune Pt. 2” shook me to my core.

I’m righting my wrongs of only seeing “Dune Pt. 1” in theaters once during the original release by seeing “Pt.2” at least four times. Yes, I’m addicted. I need this. It’s not every day insane movies come out. If cinema is a feeling, then I felt every single hit, thump, blast and musical cue in this film.

What does it mean for a film to be immersive? Are we captivated by the visuals? Connected to the characters? Assaulted by the sound? Immersion can mean all of these things, but what it means is believing in it. Arrakis isn’t just another CGI wasteland or poorly blended background. It’s a conquest. A rebellion. A war. A rise. A fall. Because I connected with the characters in “Part 1,” I’m with them every step of the way. I have no problem with being fully focused in a theater, but when I watch “Dune Pt.1 & 2,” it’s like I’m not even there.

At the center of “Dune Pt. 2” is a battle of power and love. Our young protagonist, Paul Atredies is grappling with destiny as he goes on a path of ascendency. He’s driven by revenge and defies the concepts of human will. As he proves his strength as a skilled fighter amongst the indigenous Fremen, he finds himself grappling with visions of war and rumors of being a messiah. But this is no traditional hero’s journey, because there are no heroes in war.

Despite all these conflicting feelings, one thing is certain for Atredies: he is convicted. He’s convicted to Chani, his love. He’s convicted to bringing down House Harkonnen, those who killed his father and destroyed their house. He’s convicted to freeing the planet Arrakis, by becoming a Fedykin fighter. Most of all, he’s convicted to his dreams. The story of Atredies is not of triumph, but tragedy.

Sci-fi is political. Anyone who tells you otherwise is dead wrong. The story of “Dune” is a game of power. House Atredies is positioning itself to use the Fremen as fighters for a revolution. House Harkonnen seeks to control Arrakis for spice. The Imperium seeks to tie up loose ends. The Bene Gesserit wants to keep them all under their thumb. These names may not mean anything now, but they’re key to understanding that this isn’t a good versus evil story. How can good intentions be political?

Religion is a reoccurring motif in this film. Not to push a belief, but to convey how those in power use it to manipulate and oppress the weaker man. This is all to say Atredies can believe he’s well intentioned, but because he’s a politician, he’s a pawn in a more powerful entity’s plan—whether he realizes it or not.

To switch gears, I haven’t talked about the best parts of “Dune Pt. 2” enough: the performances and technical presentation. Timothee Chalamet can act, like I mean really act. His subtle approach to performances fully pays off as a quiet boy who once dreamed of exploration but becomes a feared religous symbol hellbent on going up against the galaxy. His descent into ascendency is made brilliant by committing himself to madness, and etching what once was of Paul Atredies, scene by scene.

“Dune Pt.2” has fully taken me over. Maybe I’m victim to recency bias or the general zeitgeist, but I believe I’m witnessing history.”

Chalamet is not even the best performance here. Zendaya... wow. Her portrayal as Chani is the heart and soul of the film. She portrays undying strength and love through a powerful range of emotions. At the end of the film, she achieves pure pathos just through one stare. If people weren’t taking her acting abilites seriously before, they should be ashamed of themselves now.

The sheer talent extends to the rest of the cast as well. Javier Bardem devolves from a strong and resilient Fremen leader to a blind follower. Rebecca Ferguson intimidates Paul’s mother, Jessica, outlining how deep the religious/political warfare runs in the galaxy’s history. Austin Butler proves once again why he’s quickly becoming one of best young actors in Hollywood by playing the Harkonnen freak, Feyd-Rautha, with a stark intensity.

You’re in for a pure audiovisual spectacle. Greig Fraser is a truly masterful cinematographer, because how do you make the desert look that good? From the sweeping shots of warfare on Arrakis to the more intimate moments between Paul and Chani, they all look impossibly impessive.

What Fraser gets right is the concept of scale, something that is missing from nearly all blockbusters made today. With the help of IMAX, the sense of space is heightened through giant structures, gargantuan sandworms and ,of course, sand that is made larger than life through intentional framing, full of depth.

I’ve seen a loud movie or two, but never have I had one send vibrations throughout my body. I quite literally felt Paul ride that sandworm. The theater might as well have exploded. The orchestra might as well have been in the pit. Even if you don’t have the chance to experience “Dune Pt. 2” in IMAX or even a premium format, I can guarantee you’ll remember how loud it was. Memorable is even an understatement.

I’m not the biggest fan of Hans Zimmer. I think he’s a good composer, but he barely writes his own music anymore. For “Dune Pt. 2,” you can tell he picked up his pencil and tuned his keyboard. The first film already had hours of music across three different albums, so where do you go from there? He cranks it up even more. The themes we hear from the original are now meaner, nastier and more heartbreaking. Zimmer’s maturation of his themes adds on to the film’s general theme of maturing into oneself and the destruction that can come from it. Expect him to win another Oscar, he’s earned it.

“Dune Pt.2” has fully taken me over. Maybe I’m victim to recency bias or the general zeitgeist, but I believe I’m witnessing history. This is one of the purest expressions of cinematic spectacle I’ve seen in a long time. Unforgettable sights, sounds, performances and feelings all come to mind when thinking of this film. Villeneuve is a masterful director. Chalamet is an actor to be reckoned with. Zendaya is a legend in the making. The entire cast and crew are all stars. The best way to describe “Dune Pt.2” is that it’s this generation’s “Lawrence of Arabia.”

10/10

Love and loss in ‘Eurydice’

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.



Scene from ‘Eurydice.’ Photo by Carter James.

The University of Montevallo Department of Theatre’s production of Sarah Ruhl’s “Eurydice,” directed by Dr. Bart Pitchford, ran from March 7- March 10 in the DiscoverShelby Theater in the Alan and Lindsey Song Center for the Arts.

Written in 2003, “Eurydice” is a reimagining of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In this production, Orpheus is played by Jackson Holsomback and Eurydice is played by Shelby Waggoner. Unlike other versions of this myth, the story is primarily told through the perspective of Eurydice, focusing on her time in the Underworld rather than Orpheus’ journey to find her.

The play starts with Orpheus and Eurydice’s engagement, followed by Eurydice’s deceased father, played by Will Harrell, writing her a letter from the Underworld. This letter finds its way to the world of the living, where it is discovered by a “nasty interesting man,” played by Abby Sledd. On Eurydice’s wedding day, this man uses the letter to lure her into his home, where she falls to her death upon trying to leave.

Eurydice’s death brings us back to the Underworld, which, in UM’s production, resembles a carnival. Here, we are introduced to the three Stones, who are portrayed in this production as carnival performers. Little Stone, Big Stone and Loud Stone, played respectively by Romeo Grant, Lindley Argo and Maya Mackey, serve as guides to the Underworld, dictating the rules of the setting.

Eurydice arrives in the Underworld via an elevator that rains, carrying nothing but an umbrella and an empty suitcase. She has no knowledge of her past life, and is only able to speak in the language of the Stones. Upon her arrival, she is greeted by her father, who, to the Stones’ dismay, begins to reconnect with her and educate her on her past life. He creates a room for her made out of rope, despite this being against the rules of the Underworld, and he re-teaches her how to read and speak the language of the living.

As Eurydice reconnects with her father, Orpheus writes her letters and formulates a plan to journey to the Underworld and find her.

Upon Orpheus’ arrival in the Underworld, the Lord of the Underworld, who is seemingly implied to be the “nasty interesting man” who lured Eurydice to her death in the first place, informs him that he can take Eurydice back to the world of the living under one condition. Orpheus cannot turn around to look at her as she follows him out.

Eurydice is informed by her father that, if Orpheus turns around and sees her, she will die a second death and be confined to the Underworld permanently.

She chooses to follow him.

Anybody who is familiar with the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice knows how the story ends. It’s always a tragedy. Orpheus always turns to look at Eurydice, and is thus resigned to return to the world of the living without her.

I’m very familiar with this story—it’s one of my favorite myths. But, during this scene, I found myself rooting for the duo. A small part of me was crossing my fingers, hoping and praying for some sort of change, even though I knew what was coming.

Eurydice follows Orpheus through the aisles of the theatre, making excellent use of the space, and as Orpheus makes his way up the stairs and into the balcony, Eurydice calls his name from her position on the stage.

Orpheus turns to look at her, and in a heart-wrenching moment, he and Eurydice are once again separated. However, the story does not end here.

Devastated by the absence of his daughter, Eurydice’s father allows the Stones to dip him in the River of Forgetfulness, reverting him to a childlike state, similar to the state Eurydice was in when she first arrived in the Underworld. Eurydice returns to him, but it is too late.

After she discovers her father, the Lord of the Underworld demands that she be his bride. Devastated by the loss of her father and the demands of the Lord of the Underworld, she writes a letter to Orpheus and allows the Stones to dip her in the River as well, resigning herself to the same forgetful fate as her father.

Soon after this, Orpheus makes his way back to the Underworld via the raining elevator, having died. He finds Eurydice’s letter, but he has already forgotten the language of the living, and he cannot read it.

This was, by far, one of the most moving productions I have ever seen at the University of Montevallo.

One detail that stood out to me was the portrayal of the Underworld as a carnival.

“One of the things that I really love about ‘Eurydice’ is that Sarah Ruhl, in an interview, said that the keys to the world of the play are the Stones. Once you figure out who the Stones are, that is going to drive you through the rest of the play,” Pitchford said. “I started thinking about who I wanted the Stones to be and what they represented. They are, to some extent, the authority of the Underworld. But, in addition to that, they are comic relief.”

Pitchford explained that, in developing his portrayal of the Stones, he considered how to best create an authoritative figure that could still act as comedic relief.

“I also started thinking about the growth of Eurydice through this play, and how, when she reaches the Underworld, she is like an infant. She doesn’t know how to communicate, she doesn’t know where she is or what she’s doing there, or any of that stuff. From that point, Father teaches her,” Pitchford said. “By the time she leaves, she’s an adult again. She has the emotional maturity and the intelligence of an adult again, which is why it becomes hard for her to choose whether she wants to go with Father or to go with Orpheus. One of the things I wanted to do was get back to this idea of innocence and memories that exist between parents and children, particularly memories that stick out in a very big way.”

This thought process is what resulted in the carnival imagery that audiences saw on the Rebecca J. Luker stage during “Eurydice.”

“The idea of the carnival becomes this symbolism for a thing that would be remembered between a father and a daughter and would help her feel like she’s back in her childhood again,” Pitchford said.

The UM theatre department’s production of “Eurydice” was filled with rich imagery and heartfelt moments that still remain on my mind over a week later, and will surely stay there for weeks, months and years to come.

April Fools’

Year senior on take backwards a

Editor news, BRYANT M.K BY.

Bit the to commitment my appreciate least at can you that hope I, head my in was it as funny as isn’t concept the if even. Thanks… this read somehow to managed actually who those to, and. It of most the make! Involved get– here time more have still who those to! Us at throws future the whatever handle can we that know I and, much so overcome already have we. There almost we’re– seniors fellow my to!

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Moping and TikTok through scrolling, day all dorm my in sit would I, class have didn’t I when, part most the for. Happen not did that. Change magically would something, in moving after, that thought I. Dorm college ever-first my into moved I, August in later, then. Moping and TikTok through scrolling, day all bed in sat I. House my left barely, I year that of August through March from. College start to year strange a was this, obviously. Montevallo of University the at year freshman my started I, 2020 September in.

UM slaughterhouse in works

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.



Main Hall, future site of UM’s slaughterhouse. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

While the University of Montevallo provides a diverse selection of food options at the Anna Irvin Cafeteria, there’s one thing students want more of: local meat. In a poll sent out by the Student Government Association, 99.99% of students, including vegans and vegetarians, responded that the campus body was in dire need of more local meat options.

The solution? UM’s own slaughterhouse.

Plans for the Falcon and Other Animal Factory, the official name of the slaughterhouse, are underway. Construction will begin April 18 in Main Hall, which is to be renovated in order for the slaughterhouse to be housed in the front lobby.

FOAF designer, Sir. Strawberry Jellysire, said, “The Main Hall lobby is a wasted space and perfectly laid out for a slaughterhouse. We will mainly just be refurbishing the area to include washable, metal interiors. Students will still be able to access their rooms by way of the grand staircase—it’ll just be a little louder.”

There were several options proposed for FOAF’s location. While the Main Hall lobby is perfectly suited, as pointed out by Sir. Jellysire, students also proposed that FOAF be located in the Student Publications Office or in the University Lake that was drained last year.

One student, crying, said, “I really wish that we could have just put it in the drained University Lake. Like, what are they even using it for? I mean, yeah, sometimes I like to go to the drained lake and just kind of lay there like a dead fish, but having local meat is so much more important to me.”

One thing is clear, though. Falcons are already passionate about FOAF and excited for new, more local meat options to be offered next year. While the food will all be exactly the same, UM can finally rest knowing that Fried Chicken Fridays will now be even more special.

National polls from the Organization of Local College Meat state that only 0% of college campuses in the United States have slaughterhouses on site, meaning that UM will be the first.

CEO of the OLCM, Mr. Local Chicken Tenders Only, said, “It is amazing that my organization will finally have something to talk about. We have hoped for this day since our founding in 1958, and UM’s bravery and commitment to the same but also more local meat is inspiring.”

For this feat, the OLCM will be completely funding the slaughterhouse set to be built in Main Hall as well as donating $74 to found a new FOAF scholarship.

On March 19, the official announcement was made about the opening of FOAF on Main Quad. Despite the good news, there was one student who had too many questions.

The student said, “Why are we doing this? Won’t it be, like, the same meat? I’m really confused. Haha.”

The student was immediately escorted off campus, allowing celebrations to resume.

After building is complete, which should be in spring 2068, UM students will finally have what they have been looking for: more, basically the same, but also more local, meat.

Go Falcons!

DISCLAIMER: The articles featured on this page are meant to be satirical, and are only meant to be taken as jokes. We hope they’ve helped make your April a bit more lighthearted. Happy April Fools’ Day!

‘Night Dreams’ is an embarrassment

By CARTER JAMES.

The latest film by A.I. Stanley Kubrick needs to be erased from history. I will personally fund this excursion.

Some days I’m kept up at night with the question: is it even worth it?

I’ve grown sick of seeing terrible movies that don’t even try anymore, and good movies that don’t get the attention they deserve. Just the other day, Austin Butler was catching flack for liking “The Good, The Bad and The Ugly” as a child. Next, they call my bourgeois for liking “Psycho.”

I’m not surprised Warner Bros. distributed this garbage. I wouldn’t expect anything less from the people who erased fully completed movies. Where I find the disconnect, however, is from the sold out audience I was in on Easter Sunday. All these family and faith-based films are out right now, and the masses decide to rush to see Will Smith and A.I. Marlon Brando start an insurrection.

The best way to describe “Night Dreams” is like the Robert Rodriguez film, “Shorts.” Like the forgotten family film, “Night Dreams” is an anthology of vignettes that all connect for a third act finale. Dream Maker, played by A.I Brando, is a sociopathic doctor that believes that while we sleep, our dreams can be used to continue the daily 9-5. In this clinical trial, he rounds up eight twenty-somethings, all in different stages of their lives, to see how in-depth his study can go. In the end, the dreams start crashing into each other, as their brains kill them. The rag-tag team band together to escape the dream and take down the Dream Maker.

If you’re wondering why I summarized the entire plot, that’s because the film is non-linear and 4 hours long. We start in medias res on Dream 6. A digitally de-aged Smith is crawling through the boiler room of a penitentiary as he makes a daring escape. He was given 30 life sentences for sneezing and wanted to partake in the trial to finally make his escape.

Doesn’t make any sense? That’s because there’s never an explanation as to why an inmate is allowed to partake in this study, that takes place at Cal Tech’s neuroscience lab and the inmate serves his sentence at San Quentin. Is the dream study about sleepwalking? Is it about your brain and body being in two separate places? Is Smith doing the study on Zoom? We never find out. The film runs with whatever nonsense it wants to throw at us.

For a film that’s so corrupt and lazy. There was a lot of time, energy and money involved. The biggest stars on the silver screen and internet star in this film. Timothee Chalamet, Mr. Beast, Khaby Lame, Robert De Niro, Halle Berry, Michael B. Jordan, A.I. Leonardo DiCaprio, with cameos from Shaquille O’Neill, Samuel L. Jackson and Liza Minelli.

Is this the future of cinema? Of art? Of mankind? Who knows?

After Aaron Sorkin wrote the outline, A.I. Tarantino wrote the main script and real Tarantino revised it. Alan Smithee came out of retirement to act as the producer and director as someone had to manually punch in the OpenAI prompts and Adobe automations.

After A.I. DiCaprio got the help of Water God King Kong to escape the bottom of the ocean, Berry went back in time to prevent “Catwoman” from happening, and the Mr. Beast dream just being an old video, I wished on the shooting star that went across the sky in Liza Minelli’s dream for this movie to be over.

Just as DeNiro and Lame shake hands in the French Martian War dream, I heard a pop. This wasn’t a normal pop in the audio track or even a speaker breaking, this was a pop of fire. My first instinct was something terrible was going to happen, then the 25 ft screen in 40th auditorium at Universal City Walk was engulfed with smoke. POP. CRACK. FIZZLE go the seats in this tiny auditorium, as firey projector pieces come raining down on all 75 unlucky guests. Film cells seeped in a man brain’s in front of my eyes. The loading plate decapitated a mother of three.

I’ll never forget the words of A.I. Brando in that moment, “Only the weak die. The strong will always survive.”

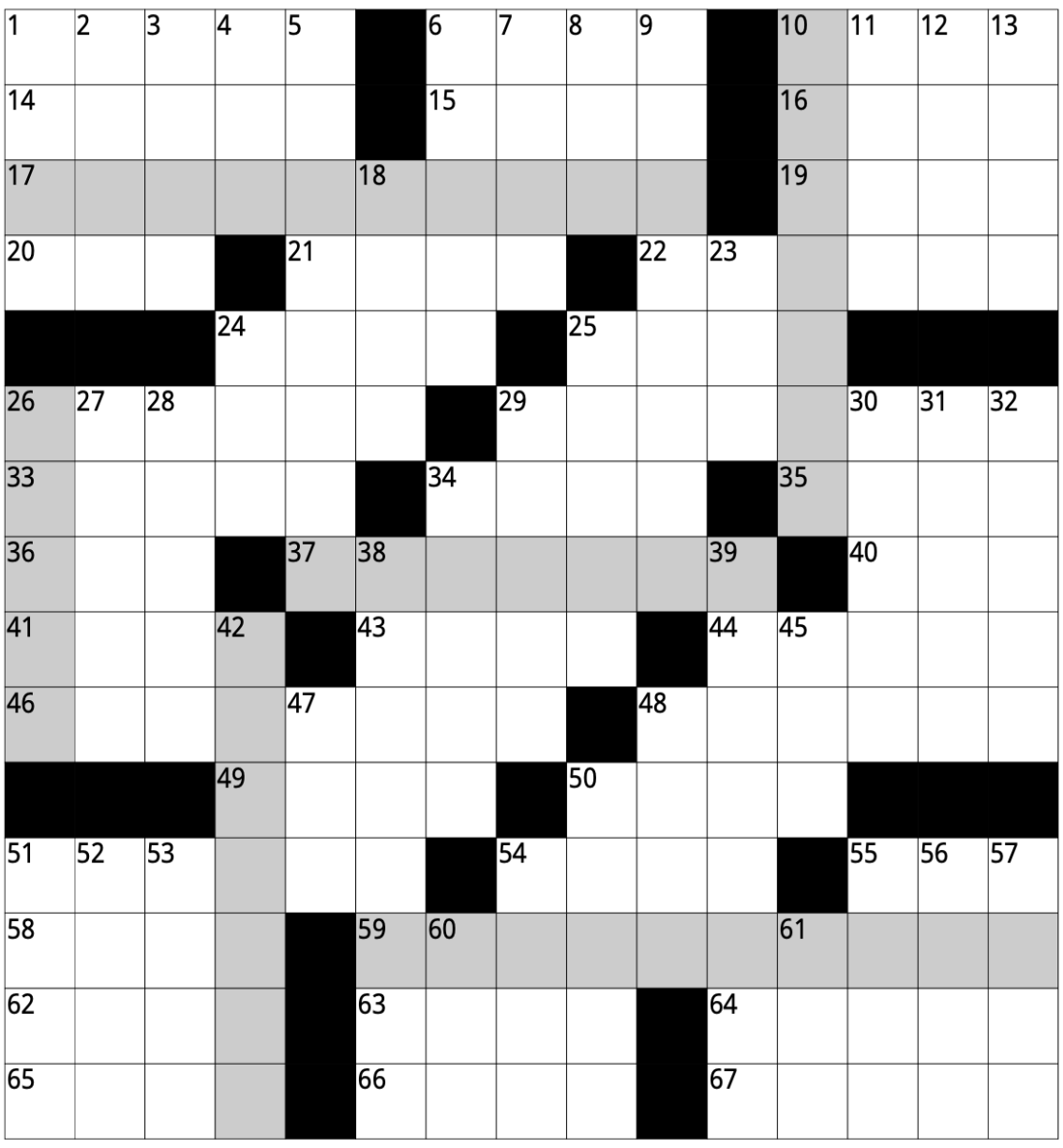
That’s what I did, survived. I bee-lined to the nearest exit as the other guests ran to put the fires out. You can’t save a hopeless world; you can only save yourself.

Now, at the crappiest hotel L.A. can provide on the morning of April 1, I write this testimony about “Night Dreams.” You may forget the details of a film, but you’ll never forget how you felt. I feel pain, yet solace. Vice, yet vindication. This may be one of the most traumatic experiences of my life, and I carried a 3DS in my pocket for middle school.

I actually finished the movie once I made it back to the hotel, it was streaming on Disney+. Truthfully, I still don’t know what to think of it. Is this the future of cinema? Of art? Of mankind? Who knows? The only thing I know for certain is that

Crossword: Jokes in the cards

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. "Is ____ _ joke?"
6. India's prime minister
10. Taunt
14. Exterior
15. What forms in your stomach when you're nervous
16. Irish rock band, written out
17. Card found with the shaded answers and counterpart to 59-Across
19. Goblet part
20. Bend
21. Cat's toy
22. The great outdoors
24. Insignificant
25. Mongolian desert
26. Meting
29. Bundles up in a blanket, perhaps?
33. Japanese mushroom
34. Loads
35. Zeno's home
36. French explorer Michel
37. Card found with the shaded answers, or what you might be on April 1
40. Academy recognition, for short
41. Camp shelter
43. Erin's cousin in "Derry Girls"
44. You are here
46. Swishy updo
48. Among
49. Slangily catches some shut-eye
50. Trudge
51. Like "The Kiss" or "Death and Life"
54. Ostracize
55. Sched. Uncertainty
58. "Othello" villain
59. Card found with the shaded answers and counterpart to 17-Across
62. Cube inventor Rubick
63. "Gross!"
64. Figure of speech
65. Self-centered
66. Cincinnati team
67. Key material

Down:

1. Bag often used for groceries
2. Sounds of confusion
3. Residents' suffix
4. "Get it?"
5. Military division
6. Get hitched
7. Store sign
8. Put down
9. "You're lying about that!"
10. Card found with the shaded answers, or a court figure
11. "__ __, Brute?"
12. Pitcher
13. It wasn't built in a day
18. 2019 Caroline Polacheck album
23. Crunch target
24. Follower of water in a dental gadget's name
25. Salami type
26. Card found with the shaded answers, or the end
27. "____ _ had a secret love": Doris Day lyric
28. Chinese dragon
29. "__ ___ a kite!"
30. Prayer opener
31. Citrus garnishes
32. Regatta racer
34. Shore birds
39. Like Jordan or Bird?
39. Tangy dessert
42. Card found with the shaded answers, or a night sky sight
45. Band follower
47. Teacher's favorite
48. Graduate
50. Sighs of relief
51. Chicken dish
52. "Doctor Zhivago" heroine
53. Fire prefix
54. Tournament ranking
55. Peter, Paul and Mary, for example
56. Windfall
57. Group of BTS fans
60. When repeated, laughter
61. Teacher's deg.

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:

There's something in the air, Aries. And no, it's not love. It's pollen, and I forsee you being affected by it deeply. Maybe buy a gas mask.

Taurus:

Embrace your inner oroboros, Taurus. If you can't unhinge your jaw and start eating your legs, maybe just meditate on life's cyclical nature, or something.

Gemini:

Your energy is on the rise, Gemini. To celebrate, raise some delicious Raising Cane's chicken tenders into your mouth. If there's not one nearby, just hit up a Foosackly's instead.

Cancer:

Empty your bank account, Cancer. The New Orleans Pelicans beckon you to bet it all on them. You will definitely not regret this decision.

Leo:

I know you've been thinking about buying some pet rats, and I think you should become infested with them, Leo. Definitely teach them some little tricks as well, maybe get a circus going.

Virgo:

Have you a desire to root and toot and ride the rodeo, Virgo? Because I see some radical changes to your personal style occurring very soon. Get a big belt and cowboy hat at your earliest convenience.

Scorpio:

Manifest horns, Scorpio, in all their forms. Think about getting a French horn or a horned owl, or perhaps visit the Horn of Africa.

Sagitarrius:

Try couch surfing, Sagittarius—literally. Ride your loveseat down the spillway as soon as you can.

Capricorn:

Do you hear that low droning noise getting louder and louder off in the distance, Capricorn? It's a brood of cicadas who are hellbent on taking up residence in your dining room. You better make them a four course meal, or prepare for the fight of your life.

Aquarius:

It's time to indulge a bit, Aquarius. Pile that powdered sugar a foot high on your next tower of buttermilk pancakes. Just make sure not to sneeze it all away.

Pisces:

Spring has sprung and the birds are chirping, Pisces. Abandon your Piscean tendencies and trade fish for birds. Take up birdwatching. Learn their songs, so you can communicate with them.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

The Alabamian is hiring for next year!

If you're looking to gain valuable publication-related work experience, consider applying for an editorial position. Open positions include: Assistant Business Manager, Copy Editor, News Editor, Graphic Designer and more!

Applications will be posted on FalconLink, or can be accessed by scanning the QR code below.

The Alabamian

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Tapping out on a historic season

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Gabe Hixenbaugh during wrestling match. Photo courtesy of UM Athletics.

The Falcon wrestling team has been making all kinds of history in their first year of competition.

They're the first Division II wrestling program in the state of Alabama, have set the highest attendance in Central State Bank Arena this season and they've produced Montevallo's first-ever national champion.

Graduate student Gabe Hixenbaugh grew up right down the road from Montevallo, a product of Thompson High School, where he had a very successful high school wrestling career.

After earning multiple state championships, the sport took Hixenbaugh to Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C.

But eventually, he found his way back home.

"I've loved this place since the first day I stepped on campus," Hixenbaugh said in a press conference on March 19 after his historic final win.

"I was mainly just looking for a program that aligned with my goals and what I wanted to do," said Hixenbaugh, "Once I met Ownbey and this opened it was a perfect opportunity for me."

"Being able to take criticism and continue to want to learn, I don't think I could've asked for a better athlete, especially for a first year program," said head coach Daniel Ownbey in the press conference.

He said that Alabama wrestling holds a special place in his heart, because it's not a highly recruited state in terms of college wrestling, and that's a major reason why he wanted to come back to his home state.

"My goal was to give people hope," he explained, "like, 'Hey, you can come to Montevallo, you can win here, you can accomplish your goals here.'"

Throughout the season, Hixenbaugh dominated almost every match he was in.

"Obviously I wanted to win a national title, that was my goal coming in," said Hixenbaugh.

After winning the Midwest Classic in December and getting ranked number one in his weight class, all of the pieces started falling into place, including qualifying for the national championship at the Super Regional tournament.

Arriving in Wichita, Kan. on March 13, Hixenbaugh was guaranteed at least one match, but had to be prepared for a total of four matches over the next three days if he continued to advance.

He was seeded as the number one wrestler in the 133 weight class, and he explained he felt that he almost had a target on his back.

"It felt like they weren't really trying to wrestle, they were trying to have a close match," said Hixenbaugh in the press conference.

"Going into matches knowing I'm gonna have to do a little bit more and I'm gonna get everyone's best…it's definitely a little bit of a challenge," said Hixenbaugh.

When he first got to Hartman Arena, he said that he was very nervous. He immediately called one of his friends, who was previously a two-time All-American, to help calm his nerves.

Hixenbaugh breezed through his first two matches, winning his first 20-5, and the quarterfinals 11-1.

He faced his toughest competition of the year in the semifinals, pulling away with a gritty 9-7 win, which meant he would advance to the championship match.

Being on that stage was unlike anything he had ever experienced before, and he realized right before walking out onto the mat just how serious it was, which led to some nerves.

But after walking out to Coolio's "Gangster's Paradise," Hixenbaugh was ready.

"I walked out there, I kinda got poised and I kind of controlled my emotions and realized 'Alright, it's just another match, win or lose, I'm still me,'" he said.

Having the opportunity to be there meant a lot to him, but winning meant even more.

Hixenbaugh's parents and girlfriend were able to have a front row seat to the final match of his undefeated season, watching him reach the top of the wrestling world.

"That was the first time I've ever seriously celebrated a win," explained Hixenbaugh, "I didn't even premeditate it or have anything I was gonna do, it was just so much emotion."

With Hixenbaugh's final win, Montevallo became the first-ever first-year NCAA wrestling program to produce a national champion.

Hixenbaugh, Ownbey and assistant coach Michael Land all went to Dave and Buster's to celebrate afterwards, where Ownbey beat the champ in Hungry Hungry Hippos.

Hixenbaugh says that there's two things on his mind for next year: doing it again, and doing it as a team.

"Winning it once is really hard, but to do it again is probably even a little bit harder," Hixenbaugh said.

But he doesn't want to make the trip alone again.

"We got the guys to do it," he said, "but we just need them to buy in now and put their heart and mind into it, and hopefully we get it done."

Hixenbaugh's national title defense will begin in November.

Meet the 2024-25 SGA Prez—again

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



SGA President Colton Rodano. Photo courtesy of Rodano.

Student Government Association representatives for the 2024-25 school year were elected in late March, bringing some new faces into key campus leadership positions. But an SGA veteran is back too, as current SGA President Colton Rodano won reelection.

Several executive and senate positions were featured on this year's SGA election ballot, but only two of those races were competitive. In the race for SGA President, Rodano faced off against Mattie Cleckler. Meanwhile, in the race for SGA Vice President, Caleb Jernigan ran against Jack Dahle. Rodano and Jernigan won in their respective races.

Coming off his reelection win, Rodano said he's feeling relieved.

"There was a moment of relief, right? Like, it's over finally, I don't have to campaign anymore," Rodano said, before adding, "And, then, now I'm busy again. So, I'm feeling great, but busy."

Rodano described campaigning as, "definitely stressful, but that's just because I'm trying to work hard at what I do."

When asked why he decided to seek reelection, Rodano said, "The reason I ran this year is the same I ran last year. I love this university. I love the students here. Having the honor to represent them has been extremely special, right? And having an impact with faculty and with other peers of mine. Seeing how they are affected by changes that SGA produces made me think that I could do this for another year. And I think I can do a little bit better than I did this year."

The SGA president presides over the SGA—chairing the executive cabinet and overseeing SGA events and functions. But Rodano summed up the SGA president's paramount duty as, "communication with faculty, 100%," adding, "Because, like, SGA isn't always going to write legislation to solve a problem because, typically, what can happen is you can talk to faculty about an issue students have, or feedback that students have, and faculty will address it."

Going into his next term, though, Rodano's focus lies on transforming the culture within SGA. Borrowing a term from Vice President-elect Jernigan, Rodano said he would like to foster a culture of efficacy among SGA members.

Continue reading this article on page 4.

Meet the 2024-25 SGA VP

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



SGA Vice President Caleb Jernigan. Photo courtesy of Jernigan.

The end of the school year means the start of a new chapter for Montevallo's Student Government Association. Representatives for the 2024-25 school year were elected in late March, bringing some new faces into key roles.

Several executive and senate positions were featured on this year's SGA election ballot, but only two of those races were competitive. In the race for SGA President, current SGA President Colton Rodano faced off against Mattie Cleckler. Meanwhile, in the race for SGA Vice President, Caleb Jernigan ran against Jack Dahle. Rodano and Jernigan won in their respective races.

For Jernigan, election results came at a very busy time of year, as Jernigan, SGA's current Director of Social Services, had been planning UM's annual volunteer service event, The Big Event—which took place on April 6. That hasn't stopped him from preparing for his term as vice president, though.

Continue reading this article on page 4.

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Letter from the editor: Do something!

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

When did Montevallo become so dead in such a specific way?

What I mean by that, is when did people stop wanting to do things outside of just going to class? To be a part of things?

What I'm referring to here is the lack of involvement in extracurriculars that has seemed to affect and plague so many student organizations, this publication included. When did this issue start and why is it occurring?

I'll be honest, recruitment and getting people involved is a perennial struggle for The Alabamian. It's a hard sell to give people: "Yeah, so if you get involved with The Alabamian you basically get to do more work on top of your coursework and other responsibilities for fun and resume building purposes, and maybe one day you'll be on our paid editorial staff if you want and apply yourself." So, admittedly, I am coming into this from a somewhat skewed perspective.

But the thing is, I know it's not just The Alabamian that's struggling to get people involved. Talk to almost any other student organization leader, and they'll tell you a similar story: it seems like people just don't want to be involved anymore. But why?

Well, from my perspective, it seemed to go something like this.

My first semester at Montevallo was during fall 2020 in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, campus life was mostly dead. It had to be, quite literally, for health and safety purposes. And, I'll be blunt, it was bad. Amid everything, I don't think anyone felt excited about being in college. You could still get involved with some student organizations, but it was so much more difficult to feel as though you were genuinely a part of that group when meetings were over Zoom and you hadn't even met anyone in person before.

Cut to fall 2021. Things certainly got better. No longer an extreme health and safety risk to gather for meetings, vaccinated and thoroughly cabin-fevered students seemed eager to get back in the groove of college life.

From my perspective, starting my first year on The Alabamian's editorial staff, everything seemed promising—at first. We had people who seemed interested in getting involved showing up to our meetings at the beginning of the year, and some of them began taking their first story pitches and learning the ropes. But it seemed like as the semester went on, people began to drop like flies, with fewer and fewer people showing up to meetings and even fewer being willing to pick up stories. It seemed like everyone was less willing to do anything.

This has been the trend every subsequent year. It's only been an upward battle that has compounded itself in difficulty each year as we've lacked people to step up into key leadership roles. And this is not for lack of trying on our editorial staff's behalf. Of course I'm biased in saying these things, but it feels like we've tried every trick in the book to get and keep people involved to no avail.

I worry that we are beginning to lose part of what makes college life vibrant and interesting.

I don't want to sound like I'm whining because things didn't work out how I've imagined them to. I understand that asking people to add on extracurriculars to already busy schedules is a lot, and not always feasible. But, I worry that we are beginning to lose part of what makes college life vibrant and interesting. College is a great time to explore new things and get yourself out there. You're only here for a few years before you have to face the unrelenting reality of being a person with a full-time job, so why not make the most out of having the opportunities to explore, learn and connect while you're here?

But the fact of the matter is, COVID-19 messed a lot of things up. I fear that we have created a culture of anti-sociality where the task of meeting and connecting with others—which was already often scary pre-COVID—now feels less necessary than ever. A culture wherein working together and holding each other responsible to create something, like this newspaper for instance, is not as important. And, I worry what that means for us as people.

Now, I'm graduating in less than a month and I'm genuinely nervous about the future of this paper. I'm worried about the future of this organization that has helped me learn and grow so much, that has shaped me as a person and helped give my college experience definition and shape.

Working on The Alabamian has been one of the standout experiences of my time at Montevallo. I've found a passion for journalism that I never knew I had. I've created a body and volume of published work that I'm truly incredibly proud of. And, yes, it has stressed me out at times and I've poured blood, sweat and tears into this paper, but I've also made best friends and created wonderful memories that outshine every time I was worried about meeting a deadline.

I can't imagine my college experience would be half as fulfilling as it has been if I hadn't gotten involved with The Alabamian.

It makes me genuinely sad that so many people might be cheating themselves out of this part of their college experience. I know that The Alabamian is not going to be everyone's cup of tea, but this can be analogous to any other student organization.

I know it's a lot, but I encourage anyone who is reading this who may feel like they've been missing something from your college experience—who feels like they're stuck in a rut of just going to classes everyday—to get involved with a student organization that seems interesting to you. I know it may seem daunting to add something else into your schedule or to put yourself out there, but I promise you the stress or initial discomfort can be so worth it in the long run. Your next great passion or friendship might be waiting for you.

There is, in fact, life after Montevallo

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

I am writing this article as a senior who has no idea what my life will look like a month from now. I have lost track of how many jobs I have applied for. I have exhausted what seems like every option I know.

My job search began at the beginning of the semester as soon as applications opened. I have re-done my resume countless times and I have written so many cover letters that it feels like I am repeating myself over and over. Also, can we talk about how writing a cover letter feels like begging, but in a professional way?

I even started applying for jobs that aren't related to what I want to do, just so I can get my foot in the door. If you suggest someone to email my resume to, I am on it. If there is a career fair on campus, I am there with my best "please hire me" face on—printed resumes in hand.

Working as a creative storyteller has been my dream for years. I came to Montevallo for that specific reason, and I can confidently say that I am graduating very well-prepared to enter the workforce. So why am I having such a hard time getting employed?

I have made the most of everything this campus has to offer. So, how am I supposed to leave with grace when I have no idea where I am headed?

For the last four years, I have done everything by the book. I am by no means claiming to have done it all perfectly, but, since my first day on campus, I have worked hard to ensure I am successful not only in college but in my career as well.

As soon as I arrived on campus, I immediately got involved so that I could make the most of my time here. I joined Phi Mu, I started giving tours as a Maven, I was on Gold Side cabinet and I became the Lifestyles Editor for The Alabamian.

Aside from wanting to do these things out of my vast love for Montevallo and this campus, networking and gaining experience has always been a driving factor for my involvement.

I guess my frustration stems from having done everything right but having nothing to show for it other than my degree. Of course, everyone I talk to about this has just told me to be patient and that it will all work out, but I have been applying since January and my patience only lasts so long.

You will be hard pressed to find someone who loves Montevallo more than me. Ask anyone who knows me and they can attest. I have made the most of everything this campus has to offer. So, how am I supposed to leave with grace when I have no idea where I am headed?

I am so grateful for my time here at Montevallo and for every single person who has poured into me over the years.

This is the question that has been on the forefront of my mind. I could stop here, but the optimist in me can't leave this sounding hopeless. I am so grateful for my time here at Montevallo and for every single person who has poured into me over the years. I understand what a privilege it is to have the opportunity to further my education, especially at a school as amazing as this one.

I thank the Lord every day for Montevallo and all that it has brought me. My journey to this campus is not what 17-year-old Ashlee had planned at all, but if I have learned anything, it is that His plan is always going to be better than mine.

Since senior year of college is feeling a lot like senior year of high school, I am choosing to put my faith in the Lord's plan for my life and trust that whatever He has planned for me is so much better than I can imagine.

To some, this might not make any sense but I believe in working hard using the gifts you were given and trusting His plan– and it is all going to work out just fine.

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Anti-DEI bill spells trouble for UM minority orgs

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

On March 20, Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law a bill containing sweeping restrictions on diversity, equity and inclusion offices, programs and policies in state funded institutions.

The law, formerly SB129, has received backlash from students and advocacy groups across the state who have criticized its potential to restrict minority and LGBT students' voices as well as their right to organize through university programs.

SB129, set to go into effect Oct. 1, prohibits state-funded institutions, such as universities, "from maintaining diversity, equity, and inclusion offices and from sponsoring diversity, equity, and inclusion programs."

SB129 defines DEI programs as, "Any program, class, training, seminar, or other event where attendance is based on an individual's race, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation."

The law also prohibits, "the promotion, endorsement, and affirmation of certain divisive concepts in certain public settings."

Among the eight "divisive concepts" listed by the bill is the concept, "That, by virtue of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity, or national origin, the individual is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously."

SB129 will also require that public institutions of higher education, "designate restrooms on the basis of biological sex; and to authorize certain penalties for violation."

At The University of Montevallo, SB129 has cast uncertainty on the future of several campus organizations meant to serve minority students.

One such organization is Montevallo's MADE program.

According to UM's website, MADE aims to assist minority students overcome challenges they face in college, as well as provide a safe and supportive environment for minority students.

In light of the new legislation, MADE Coordinator and Student Advisor Ben Ndalima said, "We will pivot where needed, but we will definitely do our best to stay active."

"We will pivot where needed, but we will definitely do our best to stay active."

Ndalima explained that MADE has already undergone a name shift in hopes of being more inclusive and remaining active in the face of anti-DEI legislation.

"It used to be M.A.D.E. so, which stood for Minorities Achieving Dreams of Excellence. The meaning behind that is—it's super genuine, you know, we are—this is a PWI. And we want to support all students, but me personally, speaking, from my experience, I was—I am a minority, and I was a student here. Not just a student, but I was an international student. So, my resources were very limited. At one point, I was working three jobs," Ndalima said.

Ndalima explained that the organization's goal of providing opportunities to minority students comes from a place of need for said opportunities, and not a desire to exclude non-minority students from assistance.

"When we talk about minorities, we talk about first gen students, we talk about the minority by race, we talk about underserved communities."

"When we talk about minorities, we talk about first gen students, we talk about the minority by race, we talk about underserved communities, you know. People that actually, you know, that really want to be in school and don't have the resources to," Ndalima said.

Ndalima emphasized that MADE aims to help students regardless of their race, saying, "If the person needs the help, we're here."

Ndalima, who has spent much of his life between Tanzania and the United States, said that MADE has been vital to his success at UM.

"It's definitely challenging coming into—imagine coming into another culture, another continent, another country. And, you know—you know, English not being your primary language, cause Swahili is my primary language. So, you're having to adjust to how Americans speak English," Ndalima said.

"I came back for my masters in 2021," said Ndalima, "And, I mean, this program has been nothing but supportive for me, gave me the resources I needed, tuition—helped me become a leader. Now I'm working full time with MADE so it just paved the way for me to be successful during college and after college."

"I'm also the advisor for the International Student Organization ISO, so I get to work closely with them and just watched them grow, and because I can relate. I can relate to that. You know, my, my youngest sister, she's here too. She was—she's American born, but she grew up pretty much all her life in Tanzania," Ndalima said. "So, it's just kind of, you know, it's amazing to watch her flourish and grow and just make friends and get out of her comfort zone. It's very, it's very, very hard and tricky, because it's like—man I don't know, you know—you're trying to get comfortable and try to understand what's happening and it's like, a lot coming in, and then boom! Policies that want to take away programs such as MADE, and it's just like we have to—we have to find ways to keep thriving and keep growing."

"It's obvious that, you know, resources will be limited," Ndalima said regarding the bill's effects on minority students. "If you don't have funding to run the program, if you don't have funding to provide scholarships, if you don't have funding to do fun events and activities, if you don't have funding to do our monthly MADE meetings that we do to have career development within the students—personal development and growth and setting them up for success—then it's hard for the students to thrive."

Regardless of dangers to the program, Ndalima said he wants to continue working with MADE and is optimistic for its future.

"We're a fairly new program. And I believe that there's a bright future for MADE. And I want to, I want to be here till the end. You know, I want to be here until I can no longer be here," said Ndalima, continuing, "We're gonna do everything we can to pivot to make—to make sure that we are a hub for these minority students for students in general, and just a safe haven."

"So, what's going to happen in a state that already has very few queer spaces, we're basically limiting those spaces even more."

SB129 has also prompted concern about the future of Spectrum, UM's gender and sexuality alliance.

Spectrum aims to promote tolerance and understanding for LGBT people at UM, and provide a safe space for students.

Spectrum president Jacob Anderson said that, while SB129 will restrict LGBT programs and students across the state, he remains optimistic about Spectrum's continuation at UM.

Anderson said, "So, to my knowledge, we are going to be continuing next year. I have been reassured by SGA, that it won't—that the bill will not affect us. Especially, since our club is inclusive already. That's it, that's how it started. It was a gay-straight alliance, I mean, you need to have straight people to have a gay-straight alliance, we're not excluding anyone."

When asked to explain what he saw as the reasoning for the bill, Anderson said, "I think it's—it's a way that these conservative politicians, mainly straight, white, cis men, are trying to basically get rid of safe spaces for people of color and queer people and people with disabilities."

While Anderson does not expect the law to impact Spectrum, he did express concerns about how the legislation might affect other LGBT-centric groups in Alabama.

"So, what's going to happen in a state that already has very few queer spaces, we're basically limiting those spaces even more," Anderson remarked, saying, "There's also word of this might affect scholarships, this is basically going to affect the amount of people of color and queer people going into—going to college."

Despite Anderson saying that he has often felt unwelcome in Alabama as a queer person, he said he does want to continue working to promote queer rights within the state.

"I have had thoughts of like, I cannot thrive here as a queer person in Alabama. But I do not want to leave. I would rather try my best to change the—the area that I'm from the state that I'm—that I live in than just abandon it because that is a disservice to all the queer youth that comes after me," Anderson said.

New COVID policy receives mixed responses

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

With COVID-19 still present throughout the world, guidelines and regulations concerning safety and procedure continue to evolve. The University of Montevallo has taken guidance from the Centers for Disease Control in its most recent evolution of protocol, but some students have expressed concern about the updates.

The CDC released an updated version of its protocol for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 1, with the most notable change of eliminating a suggested, five-day quarantine period. Other suggestions now include returning to work, school or other activities after being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medication and wearing a face mask for five days instead of 10 after returning to activities with other people.

As many institutions and businesses have throughout the last four years, The University of Montevallo has taken guidance from the CDC in developing university-wide protocol. Following the most recent evolution of changes, UM released their own updated procedures with guidance credited to the CDC. The changes are applicable to both COVID-19 and "all other respiratory viruses," as stated in Vallo Voice.

A summary of the new protocol, which initially excludes a quarantine period, includes staying home when symptomatic, returning to normal activities after being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and generally presenting as symptom-free. Other preventative measures that should take place over the following five days include wearing a mask when around others, washing your hands frequently, sanitizing surfaces, ventilating your indoor air and generally keeping space between you and others while recovering.

While UM is in accordance with the CDC, which has consistently remained a source of guidance throughout the pandemic, some students have given their own opinions as to whether the new protocol is effective.

Sean Bloemetjie, Harper Chassay and Colton Rodano are all senior students who have experienced different variations of COVID-19 policy at UM.

Rodano, referencing the peak of contagiousness when COVID-19 is spread, agreed that the guiding policy was not implemented without consideration.

Rodano said, "To the best of my knowledge, the University of Montevallo's new COVID policy seems like a measured response when considering the behavior of the disease. To my knowledge COVID is most contagious during the early asymptomatic stages, and after the fever is gone the disease is essentially not transmitted to a significant extent. I could be incorrect, I'm no doctor, I am just giving you my initial thoughts upon reading the policy without conducting further research."

"COVID-19 has become a casual affair. While following CDC guidelines is typically a safe bet, I worry that we have forgotten the seriousness of COVID."

However, Bloemetjie thinks that the policy is prioritizing attendance over wellbeing and that the new protocol is disappointing.

"It's a danger to students and faculty, and functionally pretends that COVID-19 no longer exists, which only continues to endanger students, faculty and staff. The policy, at face value, appears to prioritize attendance and perceived productivity over health and safety. It's disappointing to say the least," he said.

Chassay, who is also concerned, referred to the more relaxed nature of the new protocol.

"COVID-19 has become a casual affair. While following CDC guidelines is typically a safe bet, I worry that we have forgotten the seriousness of COVID," she continued, "Yes, the virus has gradually gotten less severe as it continues to mutate. However, it is concerning to me that we are starting to completely brush off COVID as nothing more than a bad cold."

The CDC has consistently remained a point of authority for managing COVID-19, which has included college campuses. As a federal agency, the CDC has been present and directive for guidance of what to do and what not to do in the wake of the pandemic. There has been specific guidance on how to control COVID-19 for universities in the past, but UM's latest updated policy comes from a general update for guidance released on March 1.

Other universities across the country have experienced changes in policy over the years, and situations such as visiting hours in residence halls, club meetings, the management of in-person classes, athletic events and student life across the board are all unique to the culture found on college campuses.

However, these universities are also relying on the general protocol released on March 1. Big name institutions such as Penn State University, Princeton University and Yale University are also relying on CDC guidance: This is a consistent pattern that is not unique to UM, and the results are proving to gain mixed reactions.

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Meet the 2024-25 SGA Prez cont.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

"I think that SGA has been in the past—not so much this year, but previously—a system in which people do what they have to do, right? They don't go above and beyond. They do what's necessary," Rodano said. "This year, we got a couple more events than normal, yeah, but I don't think that's enough. I think we should constantly be doing our best and trying to do as much as possible through this position. Students elected us to these positions for a reason. It's our job to make sure that we are as involved as possible, right?"

When asked what a more involved SGA would look like, Rodano provided an example.

"Let's say SGA meeting concludes, right? And the Senate meeting concludes at, let's say, 5:15, and it starts at 4:30. Let's say, after that is over, senators group up together and just continue to talk about things, right? Instead of just leaving, right?" Rodano said.

Rodano also says he hopes to improve SGA's communication efforts in the upcoming year, mainly by improving the group's social media presence—something he says SGA hasn't "done the best job" of.

"This year, we had a vacant Director of Public Relations spot towards the end of the year, right? So that's when it kind of fell apart," Rodano said, adding, "Next year, I want to make sure that the Director of Public Relations sticks around and is passionate about what they do."

"I think we should constantly be doing our best and trying to do as much as possible through this position."

Recently, there have been some notable lapses in SGA publicity, such as not announcing election results after polls closed. When asked if he felt SGA had a publicity problem, Rodano replied, "I would agree that there is a publicity problem. I don't believe it's systemic."

"I think the systems are there for it to be effective. We just have to have a Director of Public Relations right on top of it," he said.

411 votes were cast in this year's SGA election. While the number of ballots cast increased from last year's 194 votes, this means less than a quarter of campus's population voted in the election.

When asked about issues with voter turnout, Rodano said, "I would love for everybody on campus to vote, of course, but not everybody's going to be that involved."

"And that's a pretty high count compared to what we've been dealing with recently. So, I would say, if anything, we're doing a better job," he added.

Getting more people involved with SGA is the key to keeping up momentum with student engagement for Rodano, who said, "Just by, like, our web of connections as a social group, we're gonna have more people involved, so more people know about it just by virtue of that being happening."

When asked if he felt the average student cared about SGA, Rodano said, "My intuition says yes, because the people that I know and talk to have said that they care. People I don't know and don't talk to say that they care about student representation."

Rodano and Jernigan will serve alongside the newly elected SGA Treasurer Hagen Hagood.

Meet the 2024-25 SGA VP cont.

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

When asked how he was feeling post-election, Jernigan said, "I'm feeling good. I'm feeling great. I'm currently—currently, I'm swamped with working on The Big Event and all things like that. But I'm really excited to get started. I already—already have a list of current Senate appointments I'm thinking of filling with people."

Currently a sophomore, Jernigan has been involved with SGA since his freshman year, when he served as the Freshman Senator. He said during the past two years he has been involved with SGA, he noticed a lack of passion in the organization—something he said compelled him to run for vice president.

"I saw that there wasn't really a lot of passionate people in SGA. It was very stagnant. People would just show up, just sit around, vote yes on everything and not really put in any input or anything," said Jernigan.

Combatting member disinterest is one of Jernigan's biggest aims as vice president.

"I want to try to be able to hold a full senate for an entire year, and I think I will be able to accomplish that," Jernigan said, adding, "Also, I want to make people passionate and advocate for things that—for things that SGA does. Like, parking, WiFi, all that stuff, you know, that's usually stuff people are passionate about. But, I want people to, like, think about the smaller things like just having a park bench somewhere or, like, I don't know, putting up charging stations at the SAC or something like that."

The vice president's main role is to preside over SGA's senate. One of Jernigan's goals as vice president is to make sure the senate is truly representative of Montevallo's student body.

"My top priorities are to have a balanced senate that reflects the student body itself. I want every single voice on this campus to have adequate representation on our senate," he said, pointing out that he would like to see more senior, graduate student, international student and student-athlete senators.

When asked why he thought those groups were underrepresented on SGA, Jernigan said, "I think it's a wider disconnect than just SGA, I think it's with most of campus."

Jernigan pointed out that these groups often have competing priorities, saying athletes often have strict practice schedules and seniors are often focused on graduating.

Getting more people involved with SGA isn't the only way Jernigan plans on bridging this gap. The vice president-elect also wants to make sure students who aren't involved with SGA have their voices heard as well.

"I want the average person on this campus to know who represents them, how to contact them, and for them to almost know them by name."

When asked if he felt the average student knows or cares about SGA's functions, Jernigan replied, "Not at all," adding, "Which is a very depressing answer, but I think it's very true."

To combat student apathy towards SGA, Jernigan wants to create more opportunities for students to learn about SGA by updating SGA's current town hall format.

Currently, SGA hosts town halls that Jernigan described as, "very small scale," that few people participate in.

During his vice presidency, he said he hopes to promote town hall events more on SGA's social media and encourage more discussion at the meetings.

"I want to bring answers to questions that people maybe don't want to ask, or maybe don't know what they need to ask," Jernigan said. "I want people to go out there, explain their job, explain what they do, explain how they've been doing for the past couple of months, explain what they've done with SGA, explain how they address student concerns and then open up to questions, because I think that maybe that would answer a lot of people's questions or get people to ask questions."

Jernigan pointed to outreach as a problem for SGA this year, saying that he hopes to find a dependable PR Chair for the upcoming year. He points toward strengthening SGA's social media presence as a key tool for connecting SGA to the rest of campus.

"I think that we can reach those people that we don't usually reach, usually, through social media and other means, which we have definitely been on the wrong foot on for the last year," said Jernigan.

He later added that, through SGA's social media posts, he wants more students to get to know their SGA representatives, saying, "I want the average person on this campus to know who represents them, how to contact them, and for them to almost know them by name."

As for other issues Jernigan is looking forward to addressing during his vice presidency, he pointed towards legislation regarding campus housing as a big focus.

"Housing seems to be a big issue that we've been hearing about all year," he said, highlighting issues with mold in Main and Tutwiler Halls and temporary power outages as issues that have been brought to his attention.

Rodano and Jernigan will serve alongside the newly elected SGA Treasurer Hagen Hagood.

Admissions aids BSC transfers

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.



Reynolds Hall. Photo by Cady Inabinett, Editor in chief.

On March 26, officials at Birmingham-Southern College announced that the college will permanently close on May 31 due to ongoing financial issues.

The closure follows a failed 18 month effort to obtain a state-sanctioned loan.

This decision will result in the displacement of BSC students and employees. The University of Montevallo is making efforts to make the process of transferring schools as smooth as possible for incoming BSC transfer students.

UM Executive Director of Admissions Audrey Crawford explained some of the efforts being made to help BSC students through the transfer process.

"Montevallo will be offering an expedited transfer process and scholarship opportunities for all BSC transfer students. In addition to scholarships and an expedited transcript review, Montevallo will also waive the $30 application fee for all BSC students," said Crawford.

There are various scholarships that are available to BSC transfers. Freshman merit scholarships are available for BSC students with less than 30 credit hours and transfer scholarships are available to students with 30 or more credit hours. Foundation scholarships are available for all BSC students.

As of April 8, UM has had 30 BSC students apply for admission.

There is a designated page on UM's website for BSC students, which can be found at www.montevallo.edu/bsc. This page includes information on the BSC Teach Out and Accommodated Transfer Programs, transfer admission requirements and more.

UM gathers (and travels) for eclipse

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



UM professor Dr. Bruce Finklea observes the eclipse. Photo by Carter James.

Students, faculty and staff members and Montevallo community members gathered on Farmer Hall's patio on April 8 to catch a glimpse of a solar eclipse passing over North America.

The University of Montevallo's Astronomy Club organized a viewing event for the solar eclipse. The group handed out special eclipse viewing glasses, which protected the eyes of viewers looking directly at the sun, to attendees and set up a telescope to view the eclipse through.

Astronomy Club President Samantha Cost was excited and optimistic as the event kicked off.

"Astronomy Club doesn't get to really host many daytime events—of course, we're Astronomy Club so we look at the stars, we look at all the stuff at night," said Cost.

Cost pointed out that while the last solar eclipse visible in Alabama occurred in 2017, the next one won't occur until 2044—making this event extra special for the club.

Planning the viewing event has taken Cost and other Astronomy Club members most of the semester. In addition to getting items such as eclipse glasses ordered, Cost and Astronomy Club adviser Jecca Shumate have also participated in online training and lessons with NASA through their Eclipse Ambassadors of the Astronomy Society of the Pacific program in order to be as educated as possible about the eclipse.

"I have been working on planning this since, probably, January," said Cost, adding, "That is four months of work for an event that is three hours long."

But, for Cost, the hardest part of organizing the event was, "Praying that it wouldn't be raining, because that's the number one problem with Astronomy Club is it is a weather-based club."

As for the turnout for the event, Cost said she was, "Very surprised with the turnout. I honestly wish we had bought more eclipse glasses because I didn't think this many people cared about the eclipse or were free in the middle of the day."

Montevallo was not in the path of totality for the eclipse, but a partial eclipse was still expected to be seen in the area.

Eager attendees crowded the patio and lawn outside of Farmer Hall, gazing upwards with their eclipse glasses on. Excited chatter grew as the eclipse began at approximately 12:45 p.m., with the moon beginning to move across the sun.

However, as the eclipse approached its peak at approximately 2:00 p.m., the excited chatter turned to sounds of dismay as a large cloudbank rolled across the sky, blocking views of the sun.

While views of the eclipse were impeded, Cost was still happy with the outcome of the event.

"I was so happy to host and support this eclipse event. It was really, really fun and really, really cool. I'm glad that Montevallo students and faculty came and supported me," Cost said, before adding, "Wish it was a little less cloudy, but that's okay."

"Wish it was a little less cloudy, but that's okay."

Not everyone stayed in Montevallo to view the eclipse. Some students and faculty decided to travel into the path of totality to get the full eclipse experience.

English professor Dr. Cynthia Mwenja traveled on April 8 to Jonesboro, Ark., driving about 5 hours through Memphis rush-hour traffic to get into the path of totality.

Mwenja said she had wanted to travel to see the eclipse after missing out on seeing the previous eclipse in 2017.

"My husband had gone to see the last eclipse, but it actually coincided with my first day of work here at the University of Montevallo," said Mwenja. "And, so, I didn't feel I could miss my first day of work to go to an eclipse. And so, I just wanted to have experience, and didn't figure, you know, maybe at the advanced age I'll be in 2045 I won't want to travel for that one."

Mwenja reported having better eclipse viewing than those who stayed in Montevallo, saying that she and her family were able to, "see everything beautifully."

"It didn't reach that level of life-changing for me," said Mwenja, before adding, "But maybe life-affirming."

"It was awe-inspiring, and it did remind me to take time to go and experience things," said Mwenja.



'Godzilla X Kong' is exactly what cinema needs

By CARTER JAMES.

We've lost our way.

I'm always one to talk about film needing compelling stories and innovative craftsmanship, but this art form is also a vehicle for entertainment.

I'm not this pretentious douche about film everyone wants to make out of me. I like when stuff blows up. Maybe seeing this on my 20th birthday gave me rose tinted glasses, but I don't care: "Godzilla x Kong" changed me.



Promotional material for 'Godzilla x Kong."

Stupidity and I are no strangers. I fully believe in the vulgar auteur movement. I think Michael Bay's "AmbuLAnce" is one of this decades' defining films. I'm a "Tenet" stan. Hell, I love "The Fast and The Furious" franchise. "Godzilla x Kong" completely won me over to its unashamed stupidity. The film truly doesn't care about how dumb it is, and that's the reason I wholeheartedly love it.

That's the current problem with American films, they're self-serious. Too many chuds with millions of dollars are making bad films and insist upon them being clever or genius. Even the cinematic universe "Godzilla X Kong" resides in, the Monster Verse, had this problem with "Godzilla: King of the Monsters." As fun as "Godzilla vs. Kong" was, the human plot bogged down the film and was straight up boring at times. I know what kind of film director Adam Wingard set out to make three years ago, I'm just glad he realized how to do it now.

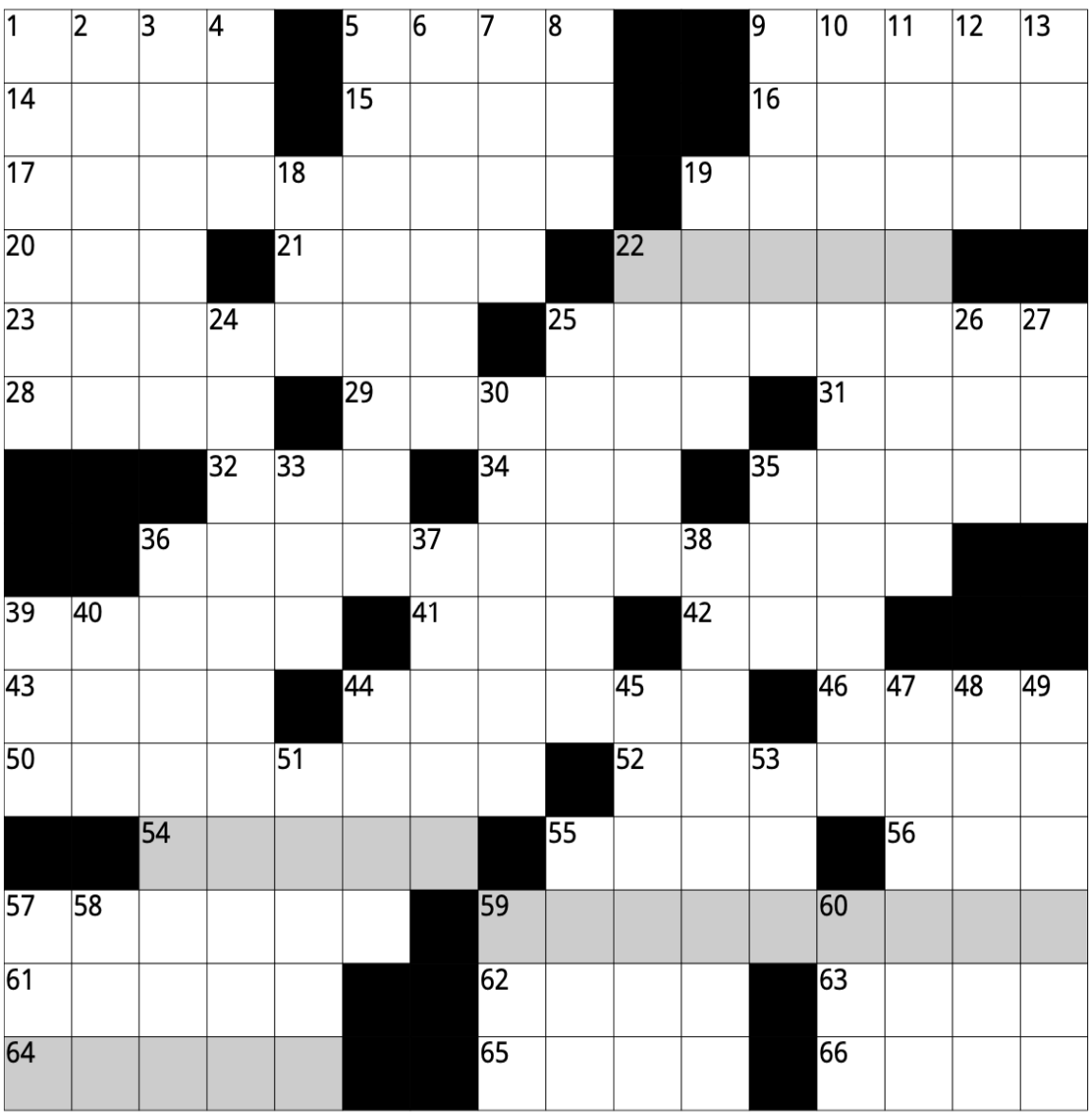
The human plot of a typical creature feature or disaster film always seems to be filler. We're all here for the action and destruction. With "Godzilla X Kong," there's a slight yet significant difference in the human aspect. This is not a film full of depth or a completely coherent story like previous Monster Verse titles; it's full-blown camp.

The scientist humans have to journey to the Hollow Earth, a subterranean world within the earth, to assist Kong in finding the distress signal coming from within the world. That's about it. They do the thing, find an ancient civilization, the bad monsters are revealed, they battle. We've heard this a thousand times. Where camp fits into this is through the execution of the plot.

Continue reading this article online.

Crossword: Spring into T.S. Eliot

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. Have to
5. Online pub
9. Suisse peaks
14. Middle, for short
15. TV's warrior princess
16. The king of France
17. Big fans of Blackpink, for example
19. Wisest
20. Proverb ending
21. Spanish vase
22. First part of the line made up by the shaded answers
23. A Tamagotchi or a Nintendog, perhaps?
25. New England feast
28. "Shoot!"
29. Precedes less in an estimation
31. Super Bowl that was held in Glendale
32. Revolutionary Guevara
34. Bed and breakfast
35. Greet at the door
36. Poem that the highlighted answers are the first line of
39. Put back to zero
41. Irish sea god
42. Mature
43. Rescue op
44. Pit activity
46. Con
50. Single from Hozier's self-titled album
52. Way in the past
54. Second part of the line made up by the shaded answers
55. End in _ ___
56. More in Madrid
57. Anagram of content you might find on a tape
59. Third part of the line made up by the shaded answers
61. Reuben ingredient, for short
62. Links numbers
63. Gaelic tongue
64. Fourth part of the line made up by the shaded answers
65. Aid's partner
66. Shadow

Down:

1. "Grey's Anatomy" actor Kevin
2. Disconnect, as a pair of Bluetooth headphones
3. Her feast day is July 11
4. Boy Scouts div.
5. Big victory, slangily
6. Tease, maybe
7. Tolstoy's Karenina
8. Tank filler
9. Frighten
10. Metric of good handwriting
11. Euphemism for used
12. Lip balm brand
13. Dog command
18. Slangy greeting
19. Practice in the ring
22. Solo
24. "Can confirm"
25. Middle prefix
26. Junior's junior?
27. Vietnam Veterans' Memorial designer Maya
30. Going up
33. Straight, for short
35. Droop
36. Terrible Russian leader
37. Dress cut
38. Slowest
39. VCR button
40. Bolivian president Morales
44. Namesake to a hardness scale
45. Long-running PBS show
47. Shot taker
48. Tennis great Andre
49. Zero on the big screen
51. Lead in to -oscope
53. Snakelike fish
55. Part of the UAE
57. Metric length, abbr.
58 Former UN migration agency
59. Tax pro
60. Permit

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

Aries

Get to your nearest body of water as soon as possible, Aries. You may be a fire sign, or whatever, but I see water skiing as a new passion of yours.

Taurus

Steer clear of your adjacent bodies of water, Taurus. Don't let Aries's newfound amphibious nature seduce you into a life on the water. You will definitely sink like a stone.

Gemini

Was your March Madness Bracket less successful than you hoped, Gemini? Well, get ready for early April Fever because your local K-12 students are putting on a tournament of their own, and if you learn their individual strengths and weaknesses now, I'm sure your bracket will be prophetic beyond belief.

Cancer

Can you smell that searing smell, Cancer? It's the smell of your new grill serving up nothing but the finest Kobe beef. Close out the school year by becoming Montevallo's #1 purveyor of gourmet steaks.

Leo

You may understandably think a lion is your spirit animal, Leo. I know this to be false, however, as a wolf-tiger hybrid is far more indicative of your nature in these trying times. Make sure to keep in mind your strengths as both "King of the Jungle" and the leader of your pack.

Virgo

Go to Toronto or perhaps Oslo as soon as possible, Virgo. Really, just make sure the place has an "O" at the end of its name and you'll be destined for success.

Libra

There comes a time in everyone's life in which they must decide what kind of "lib" they are, Libra. A libertarian, a librarian or perhaps, if you are bold enough, a Liberace of sorts.

Scorpio

I'm unclear on any real predictions for your future, Scorpio. Just make sure you handle the basics. Eat your vegetables and brush your teeth—you will surely win friends and allies in high places.

Sagittarius

Take flight on angel's wings to your nearest all you can eat buffet, Sagittarius. Channel your vast untapped creative energy into finding the most absurd fusion dishes imaginable.

Capricorn

Is the weight of the world keeping you down, Capricorn? Maybe find a way to shed a few pounds off your backpack. Even if it means offloading a few textbooks. You've earned a bit of rest and relaxation.

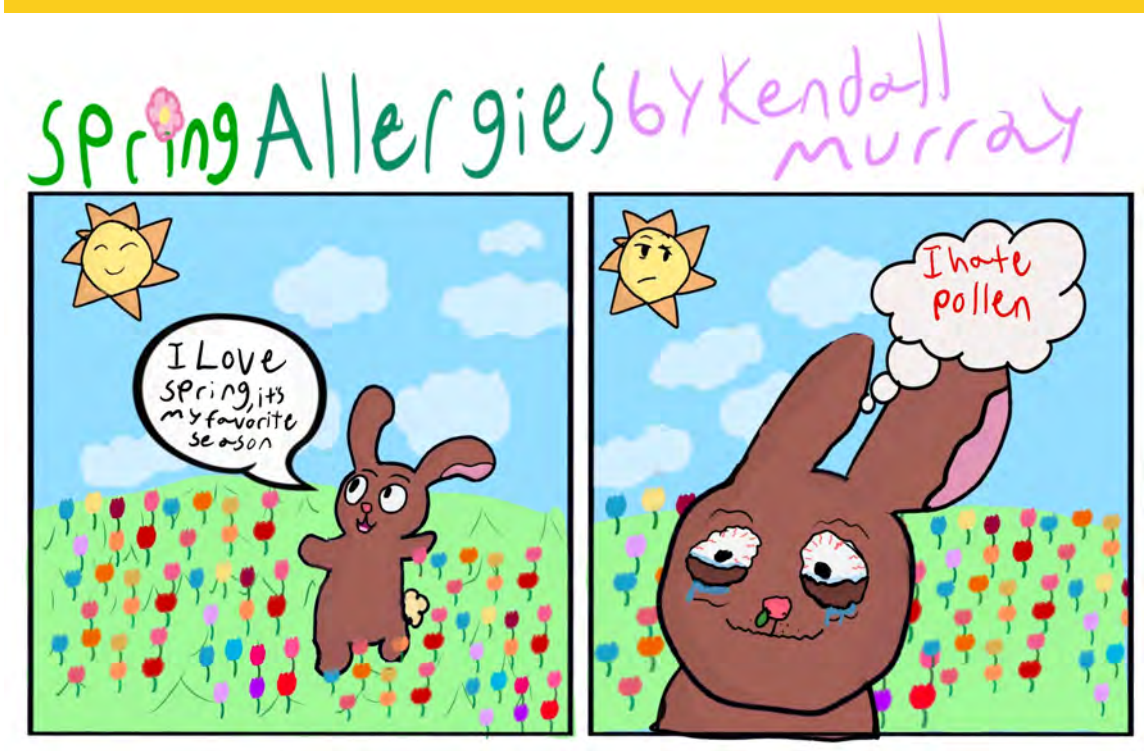
Aquarius

I sense you will get stuck in a rut soon, Aquarius. Quite literally, in fact. Invest in a AAA subscription before the bog consumes you and your 05 Honda.

Pisces

Make sure to evade the all-consuming swarm of pollen that has beset upon you, Pisces. Allergy medication will be your best friend this month, but only if you open your heart to its gentle antihistaminic embrace.

Comic



The Alabamian

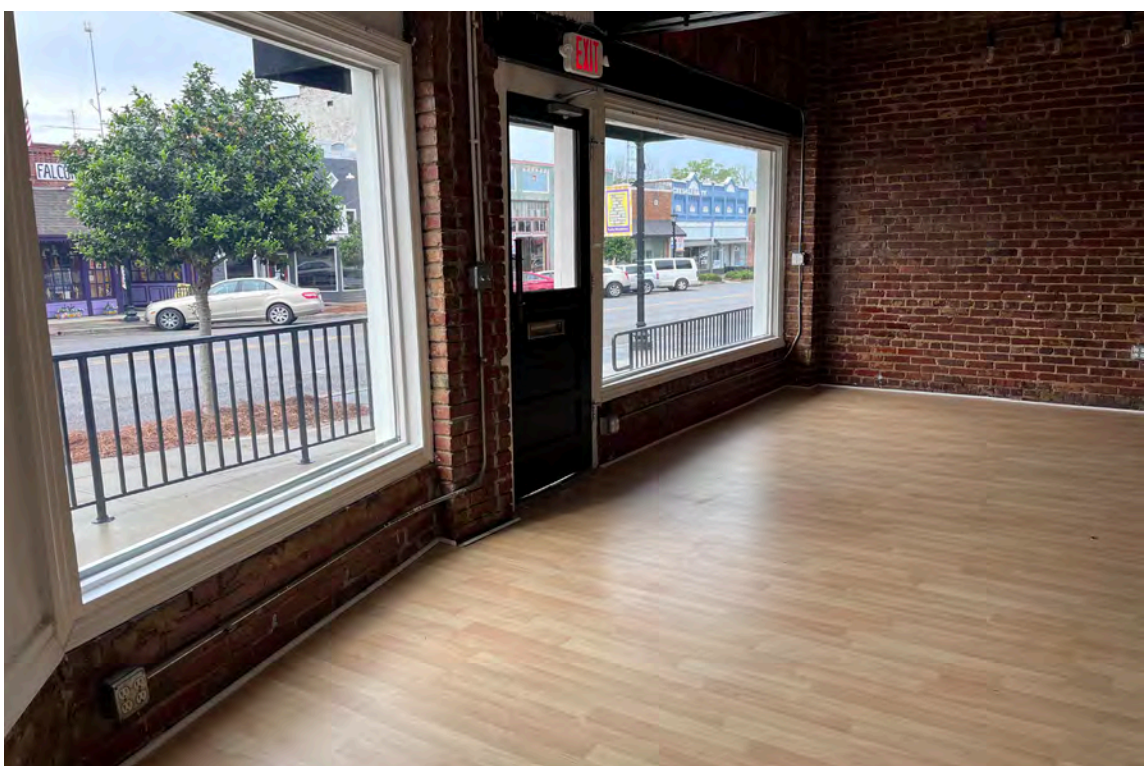
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Meri Moon: An old new face in Strand

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.



The exterior of the Strand building on Main Street. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.



The interior of the future Meri Moon coffeehouse. Photo by M.K. Bryant, News editor.

Eclipse Coffee and Books opened its doors in 2001, and quickly became a major part of the Montevallo community.

In June 2017, the owners of Eclipse, Cheryl and Michael Patton and Mary Maxwell, announced their plans to close the restaurant after 16 years. In February 2018, they allowed members of the community to stop by and purchase decorations and merchandise one last time. Their final Facebook post, following their closing in July, was on Feb. 10, 2018.

However, on March 14, a new post was uploaded onto the account. The post consisted of a picture of a partial solar eclipse with the caption, "Have you missed us?"

This simple post amassed over 1,000 reactions, nearly 750 comments and over 350 shares.

On March 20, Cheryl Patton and Rachel Phillips announced their partnership on a new coffee shop called Meri Moon. They explained that their goal is to bring back the community spirit that was offered at Eclipse.

They also announced their plan to sign a lease at the Strand building on Main Street, which has been empty since the coffee shop Baba Java closed its doors in December.

"Cheryl came up to me one day and said, 'You need to open a coffee shop,'" Phillips explained. "She missed running a coffee shop, and I'm around the same age she was when she opened Eclipse. She's seen me in the community, and she decided that this was something we could do together."

Phillips said that the reaction from the community so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I had no idea it was this big. I told Cheryl that I've got our menu. Everyone kept commenting their favorite items on the post. I went through every single comment, and I wrote everything down. If they can remember it this many years later, then it's obviously memorable," Phillips said.

Meri Moon will also offer another communal space in Montevallo.

"I think that every community needs a third space, or multiple third spaces," Phillips explained. "There are people who will go to different places in town because that's where they feel comfortable. We feel like, since Eclipse left, that third space has been gone in town, and I really feel like it's important for the people in town."

Phillips expressed her goal for Meri Moon to be a community gathering place where anyone in town can feel welcome.

"I want people to talk about this place the way that they talked about Eclipse."

"This town is so deep in my heart, and I just want to offer that space for everyone. For the college students, for the moms dropping their kids off at the Baptist church for preschool and want to stop in for a cup of coffee," Phillips said. "For the students, I want y'all to have a place to come and hang out and feel a little bit at home, because you're leaving home for the first time. We want y'all to be able to come in and feel comfortable in the space."

The team behind Meri Moon plans to keep a celestial aesthetic similar to Eclipse's, while still paying tribute to the Strand building's history as a movie theater.

"I want the same feel as the Eclipse, but it's going to be different," Phillips explained. "I hope to bring things that people didn't even know they expected."

Despite being connected to Eclipse through the people collaborating on it, the team aims to make Meri Moon distinct from its predecessor.

"I want people to talk about this place the way that they talk about Eclipse," Phillips said.

UM class explores politics of national parks

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

If you're a fan of the outdoors, national parks, conservation or the systems that manage it all, then you may enjoy Dr. Scott Turner's National Parks and Public Lands class. Turner, a professor of political science at the University of Montevallo, is a lover of the outdoors, and after visiting national parks out West with his family, he began to think of the political implications of national parks and lands.

"I was traveling with my family—we were visiting some parks out West—where there are long drives, wide open spaces," said Turner, continuing, "I got to thinking—I guess I was starting to learn a little bit more about parks besides just beautiful open spaces—and started thinking about them as political units."

Turner says that national parks are an interesting concept when thought of in a political sense, and that he thinks "most Americans who visit parks love them, you know," adding that, "It's not specifically partisan, right?"

National parks are owned by the federal government, which immediately makes them a part of American political systems, but are unique because they are not divided by partisanship. Turner decided to investigate the topic further, wondering if this could be a potential class at UM.

"I got to thinking—I guess I was starting to learn a little bit more about parks besides just beautiful open spaces—and started thinking about them as political units."

Turner initially pitched the idea of a national parks class to Mike Hardig, a retired biology professor at UM. The pair began doing research and piloted the class in 2014. During the 2014 pilot, the class made a trip to Horseshoe Bend National Military Park.

After piloting the class, Turner said, "I wondered, is anyone else doing something like this?" Turner found that a seminar, located at Yellowstone National Park, was being offered by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities—The American Democracy Project: Stewardship of Public Lands.

"I applied for that, and attended it," he said, continuing, "I learned a whole bunch about bison, and how they are managed by the park and what a unique and important species they are. But, how there's also all kinds of controversy with ranchers who live outside the park, and when the bison leave the park and come onto their land and interact with their cattle, they are very displeased. There's a lot of conflict there."

Turner then applied for a sabbatical and spent his time researching that topic, where he formulated a role-playing activity focused on the management of bison. The role-playing situation, which is a focal point of the class, allows students to understand relationships between national park personnel, cattle ranchers, Native American tribes—who have a strong cultural stake—and environmentalists, which includes hunters.

Continue reading on page 5!



Dr. Scott Turner. Photo courtesy of Turner.

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Letter from the editor: So long and farewell

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

It feels incredibly surreal to be writing my final letter from the editor.

Very surreal, and very sad in a certain way.

I feel like there's a spectrum of attitudes one can have about graduating: you can be so incredibly ready to graduate and be done or you can feel terrified and not ready to go. Of course, there's a lot of nuance here and you can feel both ways at once, but those seem to be the two major sentiments.

I definitely fall into the latter camp. While I'm excited to see what the next stage of my life holds in store, I can't shake the feeling that I'm standing on the edge of some cliff that I'm about to fall off of. I don't feel quite ready to say goodbye to my life at Montevallo.

One of the hardest things to say goodbye to is this newspaper. If you've been reading my column throughout the year or have met me in person, you'll probably know that I love this paper and I love being its editor in chief. Working with The Alabamian has been the highlight of my time at Montevallo.

While I love the work I do at The Alabamian, most of what has made my time with this paper so wonderful is the people I have met and worked with. So, as an attempt at saying goodbye, I wanted to dedicate this column to thanking the people who have made The Alabamian wonderful this year and in previous years.

To Wesley: I couldn't have been editor in chief without a dedicated managing editor, but you already know that. More importantly, I couldn't have been editor in chief without you specifically in my life. You have been there for me through thick and thin this year, and I couldn't be more thankful that it's been you by my side. I hope I've been there for you this year even half as much as you've been there for me.

To Lucy: A good copy editor is the glue that holds a newspaper together, and I was lucky enough to find a great copy editor in you. I was even luckier to find a great friend in you, too. The landscape of this entire year would have looked different for me if it weren't for having a new friend like you in my life. Thank you for being around to laugh, rant and go get El Agave with this year.

To Sam: I would not be telling you anything you don't already know by saying that you are an indispensable member of The Alabamian's editorial staff as our business manager. But you should also know that you aren't just important because you can balance a budget, but because of your great attitude, too. Your smile can light up a room, you can make everyone around you laugh and your positivity can put anyone in a good mood. Never stop being you, Sam!

To M.K, Ashlee and Sarah: As section editors for The Alabamian, you've brought dedication, skill and plenty of excellent writing to our staff. But you've each brought a wealth of personality to The Alabamian as well, and I've enjoyed getting to know each of you this year. I know the future is bright for each of you, and I can't wait to see what each of you will do next.



Graphic by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

To Maeghan, Kylie, Britton and Layrssa: The Alabamian literally could not exist without you guys on the production side of things—especially since I'm clueless about half of what you guys do. Thank you to each of you for bringing so much talent and patience for your, sometimes bumbling, editor in chief, into each of your roles. You all rock!

To each member of every editorial staff that I've worked with before: I wouldn't have gotten here without you guys helping me along the way. I'd like to think I've learned something from each of you that I've used in my editorship. Thanks for all the help!

And, finally, to each and every reader of The Alabamian this year: I don't mean to sound dramatic, but you guys have helped my dreams come true. There would be no paper without readers, so thank you for taking the time to read The Alabamian. I hope you'll all stay tuned for next year, because, even though I'll be gone, I know big things are on the way.

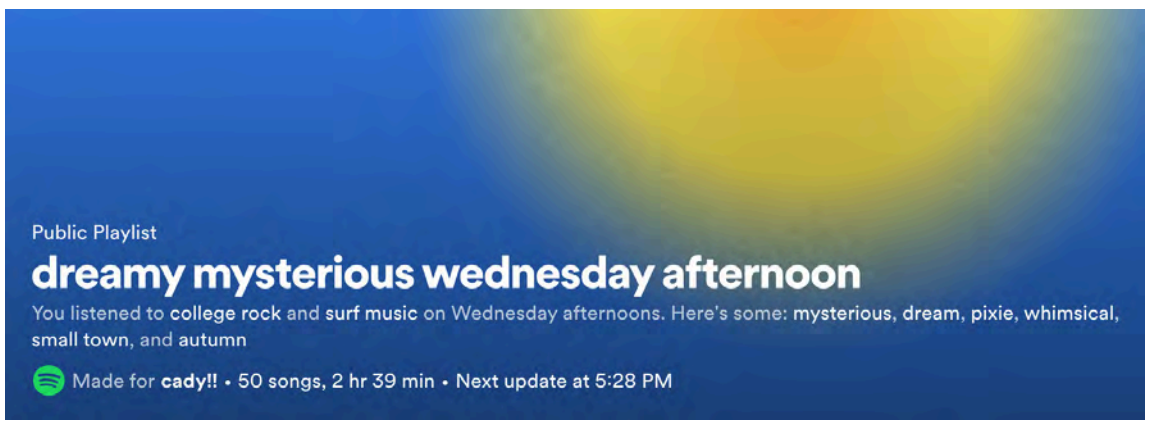
I miss when Spotify was good

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

It seems like every other week the music streaming platform is trying to drop some new gimmick to entice people into using it instead of alternative music streaming platforms. The most recent one that seems to be blowing up the internet currently is it's "daylist" feature—a personalized, custom playlist that changes throughout the day to match curated moods that Spotify invents based on your listening habits.

I've been a Spotify user since 2017, and I've seen the platform change a lot over the past seven years—for better and for worse. For instance, I remember when Spotify first added their "Daily Mix" feature, a set of six different playlists that seek to curate the songs and artists you listen to into groups of similar genres and moods.

To me, the Daily Mix was enough of an upgrade. I liked the products that Spotify was offering me with its addition. I had my Discover Weekly playlist, which I used to listen to religiously as a way to find new music. I had the ability to search and listen to a seemingly infinite number of artists and albums, which was certainly enough to keep me busy. On top of all of that, I could make my own curated playlists and find other users' playlists to listen to as well. And, when all of that failed to pique my interest, I could now use the Daily Mix as a way to jolt myself out of any music-listening ruts I might be in. It was enough features for me.



Example of Spotify's "daylist" feature.

But it wasn't enough features for Spotify, as more and more personalized features have seemed to spring up. Now, scrolling through the home page, I'm recommended an overwhelming number of playlists and options—from the aforementioned Daily Mixes and Discover Weekly to Spotify-generated mixes based off of a particular genre, artist or decade to the daylist to their AI powered personal DJ—and that's not even naming everything. The average Spotify user is now spoiled with choice.

So, why am I so bored with Spotify now?

Maybe it's because with each new feature that the platform adds, ironically despite its efforts to be more personalized and engaging, it feels like it loses touch with me as a listener even more.

In preparing to write this article, I sought to research changes in Spotify's algorithm in the past few years to explain my experience. However, Google searches such as "Spotify algorithm changes" and "Spotify algorithm bad now," yielded few informative results other than Spotify users complaining about recent changes online. So, rather than pointing to empirical evidence as to why Spotify is going down the drain, we will have to rely on my anecdotal experiences.

I first began to notice this issue with Discover Weekly about a year ago. I used to listen to my Discover Weekly playlist each week as my primary way to discover new music, and over the past several years I can say I've discovered some artists, albums and songs through my Discover Weekly playlist that I have grown to love.

However, about a year ago, it seemed as though my Discover Weekly was suddenly bad. I used to like ten or more songs from the 30-song playlist, now it's down to two or three songs. Maybe, this just means I have become more discerning as a listener, pickier about what songs I like. But, there's another issue with Discover Weekly: it just doesn't seem to be exciting anymore. Previously, the music featured on the playlist was fresh and new—similar to songs I already listened to and liked, yes, but still different enough to make listening to it exciting. Today, while writing this article, I opened my Discover Weekly to see what was on it and 25 of the songs were by artists I have listened to before, but releases I hadn't gotten around to or maybe didn't want to listen to. So much for finding new things.

My gripes don't end with Discover Weekly, either: I, personally, hate the daylist. It bugs me to no end, actually. I hate almost everything about it. I think it's so derivative and silly to try and create a well-curated playlist from an alphabet soup of generic categories and internet-generated aesthetics. As I'm writing this piece, my daylist is entitled, "angst twee monday afternoon." This is a more informative and coherent title than many daylists get, look at any conversation of the daylist online to see more examples of this, but when I scroll down to look at the featured songs, none of them seem to fit. How is "Fetch the Bolt Cutters" by Fionna Apple either angsty or twee? How about Japanese Breakfast's indie rock banger "Everybody Wants to Love You?"

I guess, if I were to sum up my issues with Spotify as of late, it's that in attempts to become more personalized, the platform has spread itself too thin. There is simply just too many features for any of them to be interesting anymore. All of the personalized playlists have become white noise instead.

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Council discusses zoning, glass recycling, dance

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Students from the University of Montevallo's Department of Environmental Studies presented research projects to the Montevallo City Council at the council's April 22 meeting. These projects sought to highlight sustainability and environmental issues in the city.

UM environmental studies students presented research done in their Environmental Studies Capstone class, taught by environmental science professor Dr. Susan Caplow.

Two groups of students presented research. The first group researched potential ways for the City of Montevallo to provide glass recycling services.

Group member Price Alexander said, "As y'all know, we haven't had glass recycling in Montevallo for, like, 11 years now. There've been a few attempts to bring it back, so our job was to figure out what we thought the best course of action was to go about doing that."

Of 150 people surveyed, only three said they would not be interested in glass recycling in Montevallo.

The group conducted surveys online and at the Montevallo Recycling Center regarding Montevallo citizens' interest in glass recycling.

Alexander said of the 150 people surveyed, only three said they were not interested.

The group then researched how to integrate glass recycling most effectively, with Alexander saying, "We found that getting a glass crusher is the cheapest, most effective and most realistic way that could produce something that we, as a community, could use."

They selected an Expleco GLS 2.0 glass crusher as the most economic and practical piece of equipment for the center. Glass fed into the crusher will be recycled into sand.

The group also found two prospective grants which, if applied for, could finance purchasing the crusher. These grants included an Alabama Department of Environmental Management grant and a UM Green Fund grant.

Council member David King expressed support for the proposal, pointing out that, while the city must pay to get recycling hauled elsewhere, the glass recycling plan would avoid said costs and create a product for both the city and citizens.

"What I like about it is that, you know, it's a useful product that can be used by our city or by our citizens. There's a lot of people that come to us and they want things; they don't have a proposal for how to cover the initial setup costs of that. Y'all've done that. Bravo," King said.

The group asked for the council's support for their plan, which, if received, would allow them to apply for the proposed grants.

The second group outlined work they did with ValloCycle, Montevallo's city-wide bike sharing and rental program.

The group conducted a survey regarding the use of bikes in Montevallo, reporting that, of the 100 people who responded, 83.3% reported that they seldom or never biked in the city.

In order to promote biking and sustainable transportation, the group developed a plan to expand the resources provided by ValloCycle. The services they wanted to enact included converting the bike storage facility near City Hall to a "bike kitchen," or place offering, not just rental bikes, but bike parts, bike repair tools and bicycle mechanic services.

The council also held public hearings for three resolutions set to be voted on at the meeting. Citizens were invited to share their thoughts regarding the resolutions before the council voted on them later in their meeting.

One resolution up for discussion centered around a plan to construct an 8,000 square foot equipment storage facility for Beelman Trucking Co. on Industrial Park Road.

According to Nix, the Planning and Zoning Commission did not recommend the council approve the resolution.

Nix asked if any attendees were present to speak on behalf of or against Beelman Trucking Co. No attendees replied, and the hearing was called to a close.

The council voted unanimously to deny the resolution.

Public hearings were held for two more resolutions, both involving zoning.

One resolution sought to amend zoning regulations for additional dwellings beyond a primary home in single-family residentially zoned areas outside the city's urban core.

Auxiliary structures, such as garage apartments, would be changed from permitted structures— meaning they are automatically approved—to conditional structures that must be approved or denied by the council.

The council unanimously voted to approve the amendment.

The second resolution also sought to amend auxiliary structure zoning regulations.

Reading from the amendment, City Clerk Steve Gilbert said it will, "Limit accessory structures and place language within the zoning ordinances that the structure should be in context with surrounding residential development in both character and in scale."

"We celebrated a birthday today, I don't know if anybody realized."

These structures must also share a driveway with the main structure and occupy no more than 30%, or 800 square feet, of the rear yard.

The council unanimously voted to approve the amendment.

The council briefly discussed a resolution to authorize the City of Montevallo joining the state of Alabama and Alabama local governments as a participant in current and future class action lawsuits against opioid manufacturers.

Settlements from these lawsuits are being distributed amongst Alabama local governments to be used for mental health or drug prevention services. Local governments must opt in to accept payments.

The council voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

The council recognized and congratulated the Montevallo Dance Crew, a dance group made up of Montevallo Elementary School 4th and 5th grade students.

Nix listed the accomplishments of MDC including performing at halftime for the NBA G League team, The Birmingham Squadron, and performing at two UM basketball halftimes.

Nix said following the performances, the MDC attended the Platinum Dance Competition in Montgomery, where they received the Judges Choice Award and an invitation to Platinum Ultimate Challenge in Chicago.

MDC also attended the Inspired National Dance Competition in Montgomery, where they took first place in their division, earned the Crystal Diamond Adjudication High Score range and the Golden Egg Award—which Nix said was given, "only to a select few dances immediately following their routine if the judge felt inspired by the dance."

In his report to the council, Montevallo's Director of Public Works, Kirk Hamby, said, "We celebrated a birthday today, I don't know if anybody realized."

The birthday in question? Montevallo's recycling center, which opened 11 years prior.

The council's next meeting will be May 13 at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at City Hall and livestreamed on the city's Facebook page.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

E-Club supports garden with plant sale

By ASHLEE HALL, Lifestyles editor.

On a small patch of land just off campus sits the University of Montevallo's Organic Community Garden. The garden is self funded through plant sales hosted by UM's Environmental Club.

"Everything here is what God put in the ground. We don't spray or use any chemicals here."

E-Club aims to promote environmentally safe practices across campus and in the community, while educating students on their surrounding environment.

"We really hope to improve the student body's understanding of our natural environment and we really hope to make a difference on campus," said E-club member, Trinity Buse.

Day-to-day operations of the garden are managed by Montevallo community member Holly Wadleigh, who has worked with horticulture for almost 20 years. She gained her knowledge from working at Petals From The Past, a plant nursery in Chilton County.

To promote the most environmentally safe practices, the garden is all organic. No sprays or pesticides are used, allowing the plants to grow naturally.

"Everything here is what God put in the ground. We don't spray or use any chemicals here," said Wadleigh.

With the help of the E-Club, Wadleigh hosts plant sales throughout the semester to raise money to fund the garden and the club's events.

To keep up with E-Club and the community garden, follow @um_environmental on Instagram.

In addition to helping with the plant sale, E-Club members came dressed to work in the garden to celebrate Earth Week and collect community service hours.

E-Club holds various events throughout the year to support the Montevallo community. If you are interested in learning more about their mission and activities, their general meetings are held every Tuesday at 4 p.m. in the Tower, near the cafeteria.



UM's Organic Garden. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.



UM's Organic Garden. Photo by Lucy Frost-Helms, Copy editor.

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Where are the Falcon faithful?

By SARAH TURNER, Sports editor.



Central Bank Arena. Photo by Britton Wade, Photography editor.

It's gameday in Central Alabama, a feeling like no other for student-athletes across the country.

Donning purple and gold, the Falcons will take to the court to compete for their university at the highest level.

But it can be disheartening for Montevallo's athletes to look around Central State Bank Arena and only see 300 faces in an arena built for 2,000.

More than 500 student-athletes call Montevallo home, but most teams won't even have that many fans at their games or events.

In the 2023-24 season, both men's and women's basketball teams averaged around 290 attendees per game.

In the 2023-24 season, both men's and women's basketball teams averaged around 290 attendees per game.

Varsity Field, the home of men's and women's soccer has a capacity of 400, and only hosted around 145 spectators on average during the 2023 season.

These relatively low attendance numbers, beg the question: Where are the Falcon faithful?

With a student body of nearly 2,200, it might be a big ask to "Pack the SAC" full for all four teams that use the arena.

Wyatt Hall, the university's Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Communications, says there just isn't quite as much interest in athletics at the University of Montevallo as there might be at other schools.

In a survey sent out to Montevallo students, including both student-athletes and non-student-athletes, 45% of respondents said they had attended between zero and five athletic events during their time at the university.

"We always want to do what we can to increase awareness and let people know about games," said Hall, "and we're always continuing to try to do different things to get that."

Hall says that the athletic department tries to partner with other campus groups in order to encourage more people to attend the events.

Giveaways and other special events were also important in this year's numbers as well.

The SAC arena was officially renamed to Central State Bank Arena on Feb. 1 after the university reached a 10-Year Naming Rights Agreement.

The Feb. 1 basketball games featured raffles, trivia and half-court shot contests, with prizes including CSB gear, pricey coolers and Amazon gift cards.

This night had a higher than average attendance, at 353 and 342 for the men and women, respectively, even though only 16% of those surveyed said they were more likely to attend an event if they were aware of giveaways or prizes at said event.

"Pack the SAC" and "Sea of Purple" games have been important promotions for the athletic department across all sports in recent years.

For these games, other athletic teams are encouraged to go to one specific event for each team and sign in to prove they were there, and the team with the most attendance across all of the different games at the end of the year gets a monetary reward that goes toward their team's budget for the following year.

These games featured some of the highest attendance numbers of the year at 461 attendees for the men and 323 attendees for the women.

With that said, only 18% of those surveyed said they were more likely to attend a "Sea of Purple" event over a regular event.

This year, UM's brand new wrestling team set the year's attendance record, with nearly 1,900 spectators attending the team's inaugural home match on Nov. 15.

The novelty and historic value of the event brought out the huge crowd, and the athletic department hopes to keep that momentum going into next season, especially with the success of the team this year.

Social media has also been important in encouraging students to attend sporting events. 30% of survey respondents said they were more likely to attend an event if they saw it posted on social media.

Respondents said they were more likely to attend an event on a weekend rather than a weekday.

This is noteworthy, considering attendance numbers provided by the NCAA showed that more people actually did attend games, specifically men's and women's basketball, on weekdays than weekends this season.

Perhaps the biggest factor in attendance is building direct relationships between athletes and other students on campus.

"That's one thing that we've talked about with teams and stuff is you have to market yourself," said Hall.

57% of survey respondents said they were more likely to attend a sporting event if they knew one or more of the athletes participating.

Having more fans directly affects the energy in the arena for the student-athletes, so if they're able to foster connections between other individuals and on-campus groups, people will be more willing to attend their sporting events.

"What athlete doesn't wanna play in front of a crowd?" asked freshman Cali Smallwood of the women's basketball team.

Whether it's the field, pool, track or court, UM athletes won't turn away from support, especially at home competitions. If all you can do is show up, then that's more than enough.

Outdoor Scholars fry fish for funds

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.



Outdoor Scholars at the fish fry. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.



Fish fry plate. Photo by Wesley Walter, Managing editor.

UM's Outdoor Scholars and Bass Fishing Team held their second fish fry of the 2023-24 academic year on April 19. The event aimed to raise funds for UM angler Hunter Bright, who was recently involved in a golf cart accident that resulted in his hospitalization for a head injury.

"It just helps people connect with us and what we're doing, and, obviously, goes to a good cause."

Outdoor Scholars and fishing team members sold fish plates on Main Quad from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The plates, which cost $10, included fish, fries, slaw, hushpuppies and a drink. All proceeds went to supporting Bright's medical bills.

Fish for the event were donated by local hatcheries and fried at the Outdoor Scholars Pavilion, located behind Bearden House.

Fishing team member and sophomore marketing major Michael Witherup said of Bright, "He's actually my roommate. He got into a golf cart accident and hit his head. He was laid up in the hospital for about two weeks and had all kinds of stuff done to him, and he's just finally got out, actually. So, he's done rehab. He's still rehabbing and stuff but we're raising money to help with medical bills and stuff of that nature."

Witherup expressed satisfaction with the sale's turnout saying, "We've only been out here since about 10, but I mean we've raised a good little bit of money for him, and we've had faculty and students come by, so it's been good."

"We got friers down at the Outdoor Scholars house. We have a whole cooking set up down there, so frying stuff is just of our nature."

"It just helps people connect with us and what we're doing, and, obviously, goes to a good cause," Witherup said when asked why the event was important, continuing, "You know, it's never good seeing one of your buddies go down with an injury or anything like that. It just really helps the community come together as one."

The event is the Outdoor Scholars' second charitable fish fry of the academic year. During the fall semester, the Outdoor Scholars held a fish fry raising money for fishing team member Easton Fothergill who was hospitalized by a brain abscess.

"That was real good. I think we ended up raising about $2,000 for that one, and that all went to his medical proceeds as well," said Witherup about the fish fry benefiting Fothergill.

"We got some good cooks on the Outdoor Scholars."

According to Witherup, holding another fish fry to raise funds for Bright made perfect sense for the Outdoor Scholars.

"It's just easy with us. We got friers down at the Outdoor Scholars house. We have a whole cooking setup down there, so frying stuff is just of our nature. We're pretty good at it," Witherup said, continuing, "We got some good cooks on the Outdoor Scholars."

In regard to his hopes for the event, Witherup said, "Goal is to just raise as much money as possible to go towards the leftover fees, that won't be covered by insurance for the family. Just help out."

Politics of national parks (cont.)

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Turner recognizes national parks as interesting units of political science, but he also acknowledges the context of designated forest and wilderness areas. Trees, for example, are considered a crop, and in forests, such as the Talladega National Forest, lumber companies can lease and harvest trees if they are replanted, creating sustainability. Designated wilderness areas, however, such as the Sipsey Wilderness in Lawrence County, Ala., remain untouched and wild except for unpaved trails.

Aside from the bison role-play activity, Turner also has the class participate in group discussions, hikes, visits to sites such as the Legacy Museum in Montgomery and a week-long trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park over students' spring break. Activities in the class are supplemented by readings about the historical contexts of public lands.

In a class with emphasis on both political and environmental systems, Turner also aims to be optimistic among environmental conflicts and controversies.

"I love to look for positive stories, you know. A lot of times, environmental studies is so negative and despairing. I like to remind people that there have been, really a lot of instances of things being very bleak, and, like, there's been intervention, and, you know, we've turned things around. So, it can be done. It can be done," he said.

The class's trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park aided in reinforcing environmental positivity.

In regard to visibility at the park, Turner said, while standing in the high country of the mountains, "The park ranger who was speaking to us said 'Okay, our visibility is, like, 34 miles today.'" In the late 90s, the visibility rested around 14 miles. Regulations of coal-fired power plants surrounding the mountains are one factor in this positive result.

However, this year's trip also had some surprises. During the class's stay in the Smokies, which is in partnership with the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont and funded by the Denson Scholarship, one of the worst storms to ever pass through the park occurred.

Turner remembers seeing a notice about crosswinds before feeling the weather pick up while exploring a cemetery at the park. The class headed back to their accommodations early.

"That night was a very restless night. I didn't get a whole bunch of sleep," he said.

He continued, "At some point, everybody was awakened by a crash of some sort. So, the next day, it turns out that this was one of the most devastating storms in decades."



Members of the class with a fallen tree. Photo courtesy of Dr. Scott Turner.

The class saw the damage the next day, which included healthy trees ripped from their roots, one fell on the cafeteria and another blocked the road.

Despite the weather and some modifications to the itinerary, the class continued to explore the park, eventually finding an old, historic homestead. They even had an old-fashioned spelling bee outside of the house, one where you needed to spell by syllable. Turner said, "I actually lost on business."

The class not only saw the surprise of the storm in their physical surroundings, but also in the faces of people. After hiking a couple of miles on The Appalachian Trail, Turner said, "We saw some thru hikers coming in, looking very frazzled."

Emergency response vehicles crowded the park the next day as action was quickly taken to clean up the mess of the storm.

Turner recalled seeing "Vehicles pouring in immediately—chainsaws. I remember Oak Mountain being closed for weeks after a bad storm."

He added, regarding the Smokies, "They're gonna get that park back open ASAP."

Despite the changes to the schedule, Turner enjoyed taking the class to the Smokies and giving students a unique, fully funded opportunity to visit our national parks.

If you are interested in the outdoors, conservation or the systems that manage parks and lands in the United States, National Parks and Public Lands will be offered next in spring 2026.



Class photo at the park. Photo courtesy of Dr. Scott Turner.

FAM hosts cookie bake off

By KENDALL MURRAY.

On April 11, The Future Alumni of Montevallo held a cookie bake off in Farmer Hall led by FAM's Assistant Director and Adviser, Laurel Dobbins. Judges included two staff members, faculty members and a student.

The event organizers were collecting donations by selling cookies.

"All donations from the event go to the student food pantry, so if a student also wanted to go pick up a toiletry item or a canned good, the money we are getting from this event will go towards the student food pantry," said Dobbins.

FAM is a student organization that works with the alumni office, attending and volunteering at alumni events.

Dobbins said that FAM offers current UM students mentorship opportunities, saying, "I know it can be scary as a college student to think 'I don't need a mentor yet,' but as someone who can guide you, even if you're working on, let's say, a job on campus or you're working on your resume or you're applying for grad school, that alum is there for you to help guide you and be your friend."

Dobbins shared some future developments for the organization. FAM is creating Vice President roles within the alumni office, such as VP of recruitment and VP of philanthropy, to allow students to take ownership of their careers and add valuable experience to their resumes.

Dobbins wants FAM to foster lifelong connections to UM, encouraging students to give back to the university as alumni.

"FAM aims to prepare students for the real world, equipping them with the skills and mindset necessary for success in their future careers. The goal is to foster a sense of community and collaboration among the students, with bi-monthly meetings where ideas can be brainstormed and committees can work together to bring these ideas to life," said Dobbins.



‘Challengers’ serves tension on and off the court

By CARTER JAMES.

Where do I start? How do I even explain?

Sweat falls into the lens of the camera. A single look changes an entire scene. Tennis is the only thing that matters. “Challengers” has tension so thick you’re dead before the second act.

Adult is the first word I think about this film. It’s no secret that adult films like erotic thrillers and mid-budget dramas are all but gone these days. There’s been a resurgence of these films, like “Fair Play” and “The Voyeurs,” but they’re all but another drop in the bucket of endless streaming fodder. “Challengers” proves why adult-oriented films are meant for the big screen.

I don’t know much about tennis. I know next to nothing about love triangles. But in “Challengers,” I fully understood the complexity of both. This is not a usual love story. This is not a typical sports flick. This is the fight of the characters’ lives. Tennis is the only thing this triad understands. Love is expressed through a serve. Sex is a tool, not a means of expressing love. The context in which they live is through winning and losing.

I don’t know much about tennis. I know next to nothing about love triangles. But in “Challengers,” I fully understood the complexity of both.

The film is about former doubles partners and best friends, Art Donaldson and Patrick Zwieg, competing in the final round of a challenger for the US Open. They’re at two completely different stages of their careers and lives, but this is the most important match they’ll ever play on and off the court. Tashi Donaldson, Art’s wife and Patrick’s ex-girlfriend, is the catalyst for the decades-long strife.

What makes this psychosexual tennis saga special is how tennis and erotica drive the film narratively and rhythmically. Their challenger match takes place throughout the entire film, capturing it moment to moment, serve to serve, hit to hit. In between their sets, are key moments that defined the three as tennis players and lovers. Sexual tension is constantly building. While scenes of lust and sensuality naturally build to that point, the tennis matches themselves are sex scenes. The film moves like the erotic thrillers of old, but takes on the concept of a sports film in an entirely new way. Everything is erotic, everything is tense. This is the down bad movie of the century.

There is no such thing as normalcy to this love triangle. Art and Patrick want Tashi to a point of pure depravity. Tashi doesn’t even see love. She only sees the game. To her, tennis is a relationship, and she only wants the best competitor. When I said sex is a tool, it’s her tool; her leash on Art and Patrick. How does she keep the situation in her favor? She lets the men eat the forbidden fruit.

Art, while he has pure love for the game, sees Tashi as the ultimate win. He’s a lover, not a fighter, even if that means he loses himself in the process. Patrick sees Tashi as the symbol of beauty itself. He was the one who first had his eyes set on her. His lustful ways almost seem predatory, except his prey, is the apex predator. The reason he never makes it to the same highs Art achieves in tennis, is because he can’t separate his love for others from the love of the game.

The sheer complexity of “Challengers” is because of how well written Justin Kuritzkes’s screenplay is and how the actors brilliantly bring out those complexities. Kuritzkes drives home this concept of erotica by making every line have an undertone. Whether the characters know it or not, their words continue to reverberate their animalistic nature. What’s more insane is how this is his first screenplay, and that he’s married to “Past Lives” writer and director, Celine Song (which is also about a love triangle).

You know how I said I could feel the images earlier? I could feel every sound choice as well.

In a film that’s laden with raw passion and fiery intensity, the cast is fully enveloped in these sultry personalities.

Zendaya. Zendaya is Tashi. Damn. She’s not even 30 and continues to take her acting to new heights. You’ve never seen anything like this from her before. This is her official reinvention as an actor. She becomes this beacon to the male gaze as a means of master manipulation. I genuinely believe Tashi only loves tennis. I would say this is the performance of her career, but I already know she’s going to prove me wrong with her next performance.

Mike Faist, who plays Art, shows off incredible range. Knowing only his musical centric performances, you couldn’t tell me a theatre kid delivered his performance. He brings an astute intensity that his contemporaries can only dream of reaching. Art is a softer, more loving man, but his competitive spirit strips all of that away. When Faist channels that intensity, he immediately locks it in.

Josh O’Connor as Patrick is the MPV of the film. He’s this manic bisexual that is driven by one thing and one thing only: lust. He’s somewhat villainous in this role, being this literal and figurative presence to Art and Tashi, where the balance of everyone’s lives can be shifted by the tiniest of his decisions. You can see in his eyes how badly he wants it all.

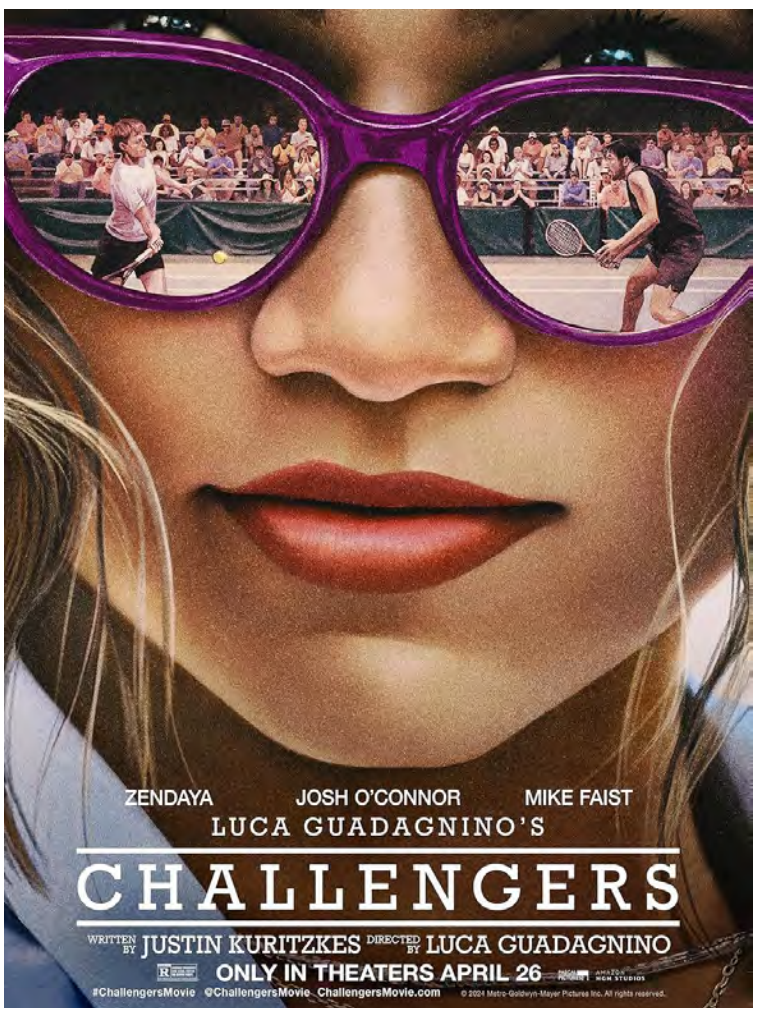
None of these strokes of genius would be possible without director Luca Guadagnino enhancing everything that is felt and heard. He makes tennis feel like the most exciting sport in the world by making it the most intimate. A serve is not just a serve. A serve is a statement. A close-up doesn’t represent what a character is feeling. A close-up represents everything a character has ever felt. Even the slightest of camera movements shifted the film, and me, in an entirely different direction. I was on the edge of my seat, and I still found a new edge every time. In an era of sexless cinema, Guadagnino has directed the horniest movie of our time.

Of course, the tennis romantic-drama is one of the most technically impressive films of the year. Cinematographer, Sayombhu Mukdeeprom shot on film, and you can immediately tell how this was the only format “Challengers” was meant for. The sheer detail combined with the inherent softness of film, made for scenes that felt dreamlike, especially when we flash back to the adolescence of this trio. What’s more insane is that I experienced all of this horny madness on an IMAX screen.

You know how I said I could feel the images earlier? I could feel every sound choice as well. When the tennis ball hits the racket, you take on the full gale force wind of those hits. Just when I thought a single look made me tense, a single sound raised the tension even more. There’s a scene where Nelly’s “Hot in Here” rings throughout a party and I swore the auditorium’s AC was starting to break. Composers Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross are madmen. The duo does no favor for the easily anxious because their techno inspired score fully envelops you into madness. This film takes place from 2006-2019, and the score feels like a product of its time.

“Challengers” is a pure tour de force in storytelling and atmosphere. It’s almost inexplicable how this film made me feel. There was always something to feel, and just about every scene I felt something new. You have career bests for truly talented young performers, an insane debut screenplay and a director who’s reached auteur status. If you haven’t been paying attention to the films of Luca Guadagnino, after you see this film, you will. As The Alabamian’s own M.K. Bryant put it right as the credits started to roll, “This is the most bisexual film of all time.”

9.5/10



Promotional material for “Challengers.”

What’s

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor; CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief; WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor; and SAM COST, Business manager.

As the 2023-24 school year comes to a close, one question seems to be at the front of everyone’s mind around Montevallo’s campus: what’s next?

For graduating seniors, a whole new chapter of their lives starts on May 4 as they kickpoff their post-graduation endeavors. But, even for those students who aren’t graduating in May, summer can still be a transitory period, as they set out on internships, take classes or just relax.

In this section, four members of The Alabamian’s editorial staff share what lies in store for them in the coming months and reflect on how this school year—or the past few—have treated them.

Nothing goes to plan—and that’s okay

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.

I have been panicking as of late.

When I started college, my intention was always to head straight into a graduate program right upon graduating. But I should know by now that I rarely, if ever, follow plans that I conceived four years prior.

It turns out running a newspaper takes up a lot of your time, as do classes and trying to maintain some semblance of a social life. So, no grad school applications were filled out this year. R.I.P. to freshman year Cady’s plan.

However, this means in the very near future I will be living on gap year time—and what does that even mean? I’ve been a student for, basically, all of my life; it’s really hard to imagine my life without the structure of school. I’m someone who loves structure and routine, so the purgatory threat of being away from school is terrifying to me.

I can’t wait to see who I will be next.

But, as scary as all of this is, it’s necessary. It’ll be a challenge, but it’ll be good for me to experience a little bit more life outside the structures and routines of being a student.



Cady Inabinett. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

When it feels like time is moving too quickly, I like to remember a quote from comedian Jenny Slate. She said, “As the image of myself becomes sharper in my brain and more precious, I feel less afraid someone else will erase me by denying me love.” While my anxieties at this point in time aren’t about being disliked, I feel as though the sentiment of self-image developing with time and leading to increased self-confidence is good to bear in mind as I head out into the next stage of my life. I can’t wait to see who I will be next.

Concrete and raves

By SAM COST, Business manager.

This year was my junior year at Montevallo, and it was, by far, the craziest one yet!

I stayed pretty busy between my campus jobs, club roles and classes. However, my favorite thing I did this year was host an eclipse watch party on campus! It was a big hit, and really helped promote the Astronomy Club.



Sam Cost. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

As for my summer, I have a couple of big things planned. Mainly, I will be focusing on my internship at CEMEX. CEMEX is a building material company focusing mainly on concrete. I will be working at a quarry just down the road in Brierfield, helping more with the engineering aspect of things. I am really excited about it!

Besides my internship, I am planning on going to both Bonnaroo and Lalapalooza to get my rave on. Overall, I am really excited for the summer!

next?

What's a plan?

By LUCY FROST-HELMS, Copy editor.

Okay, well, I guess I have one plan. After I graduate—which I hope that happens unless something wild occurs in the next two weeks—I am going to finish out my internship in Chattanooga, which will end on June 30. However, after that, I'm not really sure. I have a trip to the Smokies planned, and maybe I'll make it down to the beach soon, but in all honesty, I feel like I haven't had time to plan anything. Maybe I'll continue editing Oxford commas in the future, or maybe I'll start selling apples, or maybe I'll win the lottery. One thing is for sure, though. I'm going to miss UM—like, a lot. Right now, I'm tired and I don't want to do my final exams, but when I walk across the stage on Star Wars Day (May the 4th be with you), I'll be sad. So, I'll definitely need a mimosa. Or two. Or 10. Montevallo has done me good, and I'll never forget it.



Lucy Frost-Helms. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

WE'LL BE BACK SOON!

PRINT EDITIONS OF THE ALABAMIAN WILL RETURN IN AUGUST. SEE YOU THEN!

Mr. Walter goes to Washington

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Having summer plans that entail more than lazing around the house for a few months or working a highly prestigious retail or waterpark job is very new to me.

Following the end of classes, I'll spend a little under a month at home in Huntsville before heading to Washington, D.C. for a two-month internship with the National Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists. During that month, I look forward to resting my brain a bit and hiking a lot. My mind has, as usual, been so active this semester at the expense of my body turning to trash, so it will be a nice change of pace to flip the script and let my brain atrophy for a bit instead.



Wesley Walter. Photo by Ashlee Hall, Lifestyles editor.

I can't say how excited I am to be going to D.C. though, mostly because I don't think it's fully clicked to me that I actually will be going. I've never lived outside Alabama for more than a month, which makes the idea of living there more bizarre to me than I anticipated. But more than that, I'll be there during election season, which has me equally as nervous as I am excited.

Scariness aside, though, I like D.C. a lot, and it feels great to have an opportunity to use what I have learned through The Alabamian at a professional organization. More importantly though, for once my plans beat working in the waterpark industry by a mile!

Artists take over Orr Park

By M.K. BRYANT, News editor.

Every year, on the third Saturday in April, the Montevallo Arts Collaborative hosts the Montevallo Arts Festival in Orr Park. This year's festival was held on April 20, and featured work from over 100 Alabama-based artists.

Live music played throughout the event, with artists including Alexa Fontaine, Ramblin Ricky Tate, Murder of Jane Crow, Shaheed & DJ Supreme and The High Fidelics.

The festival also included face painting, balloon animals and a children's craft table.

Montevallo Arts Collaborative member Emily Gill explained the growth of the festival over the years.

"It started as a way to bring people to town, and to see all the new things we've got, but also just to engage with all the different artists who call Central Alabama home. And now, we have people from all around the region, which is very exciting," Gill said.

Leading up to the day of the festival, the Montevallo Arts Fest Facebook page highlighted some of the different artists who would be in attendance.

Some of these artists included Melanie Poole, William Colburn, Catherine Blake and Tim Tingle— the artist known for carving the trees in Orr Park.

Tingle explained some of the work that goes into making the Arts Fest a success each year.

"We work hard at it. We go to other shows, and all the time, we're looking for good artists. We always find some good, unique artists, and we invite them to the show. So, the number of artists has increased the last few years because we do that," Tingle said.

Gill discussed the Montevallo Arts Collaborative's effort to keep the artists at the center of the festival.

"Sometimes, when you're doing these festivals, you think a lot about what activities you can do. But what the Arts Collaborative has decided to do is make the artists the core. Sure, we provide food and children's activities, but what we really want is for the artists and their booths to be the focus of it. That's what holds people here," Gill explained.

Following the event, the Montevallo Arts Fest Facebook page posted the winning artists of the festival.

The winners were:

- Best in painting: Tammy Evans.
- Best in printmaking: Aiyanna Boykins.
- Best in photography: Butch Oglesby.
- Best in mixed media: Eva Pun.
- Best in wood: Essie Ebrahimi.
- Best in metal: William Colburn.
- Best in clay: Kim Orsini.
- Best in glass: Rhandie Weaver.
- Best in jewelry: Antje Shiffer.
- Best in textiles: Paan Jindapon.
- Best in other: Steve Gilbert.
- First place in fine art: Candy Mayer.
- First place in fine craft: Ron Herbster.
- Best in show: Eva Pun.

Other events hosted by the Montevallo Arts Collaborative throughout the year include Tinglewood Festival, Art Stalk and, their most recent addition, a holiday market called Merry Market.

More information about these events can be found on the Montevallo Arts Collaborative Facebook page.





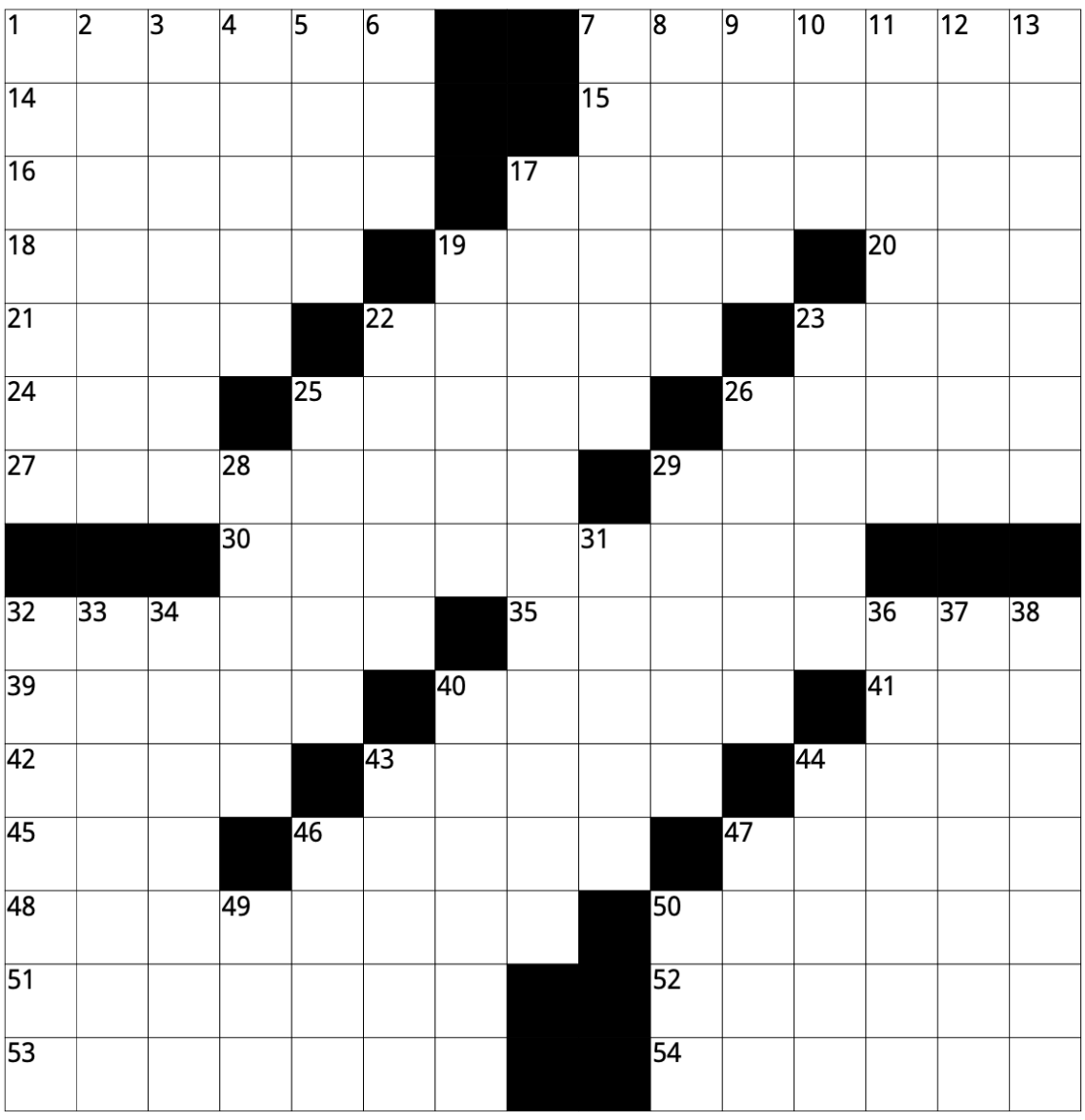
Montevallo Arts Festival. Photos by M.K. Bryant, News editor.

Playlist: Songs of the summer



Crossword: So long!

By CADY INABINETT, Editor in chief.



Across:

1. “Makes sense”
7. Snobby
14. Where you can get chamomile and chai
15. 51-Across in Mumbai
16. “Looney Tunes” Hawk
17. Tithe, e.g.
18. 51-Across in Athens
19. Pushpins
20. “Rugrats” infant
21. Golden state, for short
22. 29-Across portrayer
23. “Livin’ La Vida ____”
24. In the past
25. Baby bug
26. Under the sink fixture
27. City where you’ll hear 15-Across
29. Rolls topped with lox
30. “Gotta run!”
32. Vice president after Pence
35. Nice 51-Across
39. Birdlike
40. China’s Zhou ____
41. Confidentiality doc
42. Hollywood crosser
43. Famous-ish
44. Nailed
45. Early bird?
46. Casual 51-Across
47. Utopian
48. Baby crawler?
50. “Am I the only one?”
51. Parting word
52. Follower of ka when describing an explosion
53. The hang-up of an otherwise lax person
54. Bricklayers

Down:

1. Like Odysseus
2. Adolescent
3. “Copacabana” singer enthusiast, perhaps?
4. Phrase for placing odds on yourself
5. Tropical tuber
6. “My bad” in a text
7. Tennyson poem hero for short
8. Sri _____
9. “__ __ corny as Kansas.”
10. Bit of ink
11. _____ the Laborer, patron saint of farmers
12. Unmoved
13. Set in a pool, maybe?
17. 51-Across in Moscow
19. Leader of the Wyandot people
22. Black Friday events
23. Statehouse fig.
25. Red head
26. Start of an introduction, sometimes
28. Roman goddess of vengeance
29. Fictional Kazakh journalist
31. Oklahoma city
32. Try
33. City where you’ll hear 35-Across
34. Spot for a foot accessory
36. How many times it takes to reach a breaking point?
37. Think-tank guys
38. Boo and others
40. High in 33-Across
43. Emerald, for one
44. 51-Across in Acapulco
46. “Elephant Boy” actor
47. Cuba, por ejemplo
49. Pres. or P.M.
50. Watson’s creator

Scan for answers!

Horoscopes

By WESLEY WALTER, Managing editor.

Aries:

Is the thought of all that summer free time getting you down, Aries? Probably not. But, if it is, boy, do I have a great bi-weekly event for you. It’s called the Montevallo City Council, and don’t knock it until you try it because I’m sure you’ll find more drama and intrigue there than in any of the junk streaming services are throwing at you.

Taurus:

Hit up the movie theatre soon, Taurus. You deserve some popcorn. If you can’t afford a movie and corn, however, maybe just stick with the corn. Definitely dump some Buncha Crunch in the bag though to give your corn that extra pizzaz.

Gemini:

Speaking of corn, I see a flourishing maize harvest in your future, Gemini. If you don’t have any planted yet, just try growing it in your front yard. There’s no time for zoning laws when dealing with a financial opportunity of this magnitude. HOA be damned!

Cancer:

Installing a water fountain in your domicile is one of the best and most silly ways to beat the heat, Cancer. Don’t settle for an Elkay EZS8L though, you deserve an EZH2O.

Leo:

Get ready to do your Duolingo exercises in some bizarre places this summer, Leo. Don’t let you being in the club, participating in a Golden Coral fist fight or navigating a nuclear submarine keep you from maintaining those streaks.

Virgo:

Manifest dairy this summer, Virgo. Whether you be a milk man, milk maid or new genre of non-binary dairy employee we don’t even have a name for yet, keep that calcium up!

Libra:

Do finals have you feeling like you’re in clown college, Libra? Good. I see a repressed passion for clownery in you, and think you might need to transfer. But if that seems like a lot, just do some undergraduate research on clowns, I guess.

Scorpio:

What if... hear me out... you start, not a soft-serve, but a hard-serve business? What does that mean? I don’t know, but look into it this summer Scorpio.

Sagittarius:

I detect you having a summer full of leafy greens and maybe a couple ruptured spleens, Sagittarius. Keep your upper left abdominal region guarded while shopping for fresh vegetables. Got to make sure one of those spleens isn’t yours!

Capricorn:

Don’t think twice, its alright, Capricorn. Actually, scratch that. Don’t even think once. Turn your cerebral cortex off this summer. It’ll do ya’ good.

Aquarius:

Release your inner child during the break, Aquarius. Try asking someone their favorite dinosaur, eating some non-toxic craft supplies or simply just living off your parent’s dime for a bit longer.

Pisces:

You’ve made it so far, Pisces. By Pisces, I mean me, and by far, I mean to the last horoscope of the last issue of the semester! Make sure to make the most of your summer and maybe take a break from writing horoscopes for a bit.



Graphic by Layrssa Molina-Becerra, Graphic designer.

